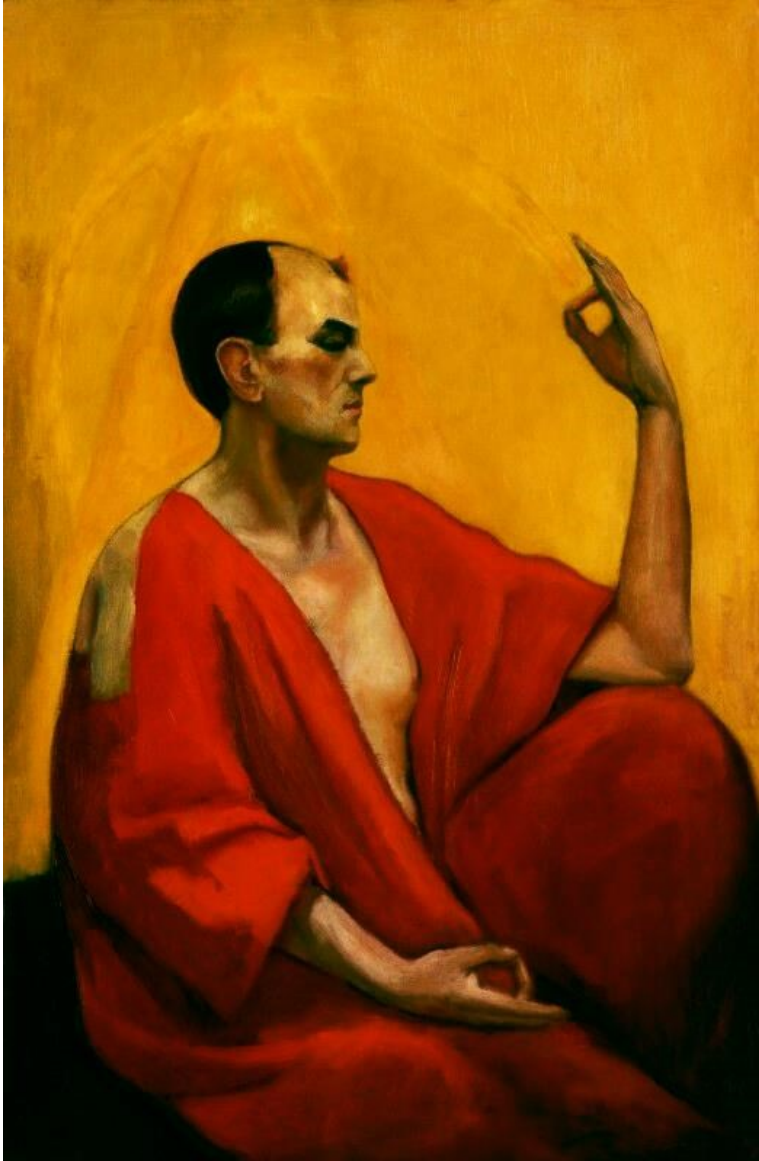


Fire in the Mountain



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Six Talks on the Law of
Thelema of Aleister Crowley

Seten Tomh

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“We give the book ∞ ” H.R.

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Proem

I first encountered Aleister Crowley in 1967 or 1968 when I was given a copy of his magnum opus, *Magick in Theory and Practice*, by my father on Christmas Day. I had already been a keen student of “forbidden knowledge” for several years, and had acquired a certain notoriety for giving a talk on “Sorcery and Black Magic” to my rural Ontario grade 4 class in 1964 or 1965, at the age of ten.¹ I remember my teacher, Mrs. Peckover, calling me “a superstitious fool.” For many years I was shunned, shamed, and beaten by religious fascists who neither know nor understand the truth uttered by Jesus of Nazareth himself when he said, “Ye are gods,” the same religious fascists who were responsible for the repression, oppression, and attempted genocide of the indigenous peoples in my own country of Canada and elsewhere, and whose ancestors burned the books of the Gnostic Christians in which alone the truth of Christianity is concealed, awaiting rediscovery at the dawn of the Age of Man, thus perpetrating upon humanity the long dark age of the West from which we are only now beginning to awake.

However, when I discovered Crowley’s Magick I realized that I had come home, for Magick has nothing to do with sleight of hand but is truly both a map of the human soul and a compass. In Asia, the science of spirituality has flourished for thousands of years and is now called Tantra, of which Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism are merely prolegomena and adumbrations. For the past 57 years, it has been my exclusive preoccupation and study, in the course of which I have studied and practised astrology; shamanism; the Western esoteric tradition; the ancient Egyptian,

¹ Doris M. Patton School, King City, Ontario, now a Protestant Christian Church.

Greek, and Roman mysteries; Qabalah; Gnosticism; Sufism; Hinduism; Buddhism; Taoism; Jungian psychology; comparative religion; and the philosophy of science. In the course of this protean curriculum I have realized that all of the sacred traditions of humanity have one common source, root, and origin, and that human history has been a battleground between those who know, those who do not know, and those who do not want you to know, lest you reach out and take of the fruit of the Tree of Life and eat, becoming like gods and living forever. This fruit is the birthright of every man and every woman, but the privileged and the powerful have no interest in your possessing the keys of the kingdom of heaven, which is nought other than your own Divine Self, which is the Breath of God. Those who enslave are slaves themselves, and thus it has been.

Today we stand at the threshold of human extinction. Materialism destroys the life of the Spirit in its psychotic quest for an illusory self-satisfaction, pacifying the people with mindless distractions and vain pretensions and promises. The opening of the New Aeon is dystopian, but out of that very darkness will emerge a new light, as bright and invigorating as the darkness is debilitating. As it is written, "Osiris is a black god." The Age of the Black Sun (or Black Star), Aquarius-Capricorn, is upon us. Set blasts us with his purifying heat, but Horus the Child shall emerge crowned and conquering, inaugurating the flowering of humanity, purged of its iniquity through sacrifice.

*Ex tenebris lumem. Ex ignorantia, sapientia. Ex morte, vita. De degeneratione, regeneratione.*² The time is upon us! Do not despair! Rejoice in the Feast of the Prophet and His Bride!

² *Nota numerum!*

Fire in the Mountain

Seten Tomh
August 12, 2021 CE
in the 117th year of the True Aeon

Editorial Note

The author was invited by the Gnostic Sanctuary to present a series of six talks on the Law of Thelema to commemorate the Thelemic Feast (*ganachakra*) of the Prophet and His Bride on Thursday, August 12, 2021 CE (☉ in 20° 8' 19", An CXVII). These talks were presented between Monday, August 9 and Monday, August 16.

These talks inaugurate a new dispensation in Thelemic exegetics.

Aleister Crowley

A Non-diabolical Perspective on the Beast

Edward Alexander Crowley (1875–1947), who used the pen name of Aleister Crowley, was recently voted the 73rd greatest Briton.³ He beat out Robert the Bruce, king of the Scots; the Unknown Warrior; Edward Jenner, inventor of the Smallpox vaccine; Charles Babbage, inventor of the first computer; Chaucer; and J.R.R. Tolkien, amongst others. A painting of Crowley in his spiritual persona of “the Master Therion” is even hanging in the National Portrait Gallery of historically important and famous British people. Pretty good for a man reviled by the British tabloid press as “a man we’d like to hang” and “the wickedest man in the world.”

Such is the reputation of Aleister Crowley, whose own mother, Emily Bertha Crowley (1848–1917) declared him (whether seriously or in a fit of pique is not known) to be the Beast 666, the Antichrist himself. As far as I know, Crowley was nearly unique in identifying himself as the Beast of Revelation, otherwise apparently based on Nero (37–68), the fifth Roman emperor, whose reign is associated with tyranny, extravagance, and debauchery. Nietzsche too identified himself with the Antichrist.

³ BBC, “The Top 100 Great Britons,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/100_Greatest_Britons.

The Crowleys were upper middle-class Victorian English rural semi-gentry, heirs to a significant fortune associated with Crowley Alton Ales, and fanatical fundamentalist evangelical Christians. Trained as an engineer, and a former Quaker, the senior Edward Crowley (1829–1887) used the leisure that his family fortune allowed him to travel as an itinerant preacher, preaching the gospel to strangers and keeping in touch with them for years afterwards. After the death of his father, ironically of tongue cancer, when Alex was 11, Alex turned against his strict Christian upbringing as a Plymouth Brother and began to seek out a more muscular spiritual life. Looking for available models of rebellion, his attention turned to the “Satanic” poets, Byron, Shelley, and, preeminently, Swinburne and Baudelaire; conservative social philosophers like Herbert Spencer, Thomas Carlyle, and Nietzsche; and the French Decadent movement, amongst other influences too numerous to name.

The novelist W. Somerset Maugham said of Crowley that “he was grossly, but not unintelligently, imitative.” Maugham underestimates Crowley’s intelligence here, who considered pursuing the career of a professional chess master or a diplomat; he was exceptionally well read with a phenomenal memory, even at the end of his rather exhausting life. Maugham and Crowley intensely disliked each other. Maugham wrote an entire novel, entitled *The Magician* (1908), parodying Crowley as a “black magician” named Oliver Haddo (Crowley, in return, accused Maugham of plagiarism, which is the pot calling the kettle black in Crowley’s case), but in this talk I come not to disparage Aleister Crowley, or to praise him.

We all know Crowley’s reputation, and many of us know that it was warranted in many ways. Less well known are his admirers, which included men like the sculptor Rodin, artist Augustus John, the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa, military historian and strategist J.F.C. Fuller, poet Victor Neuburg, and others, even up to the present day, such as esoteric scholar Tobias Churton, whose biography of Crowley is four volumes

long. Crowley mentions in his *Magick Without Tears* that he had known personally over eighty of the world's greatest geniuses. The question is "why?" Who was Aleister Crowley? His bad traits are well known, but what attracted even the best people to him and makes him an object of remembrance and even admiration today?

As a youth, Crowley attended a succession of private Christian boarding schools, where he was subjected to intense bullying and abuse, especially after his father's death. This lamentable treatment further turned him against the religion of his parents, culminating in his first attempt at autobiography entitled "A Boyhood in Hell." Interestingly, in a classic psychoanalytic reversal, the bullied in childhood became a bully in adulthood, lashing out at women, animals, perceived inferiors, even his own body, coupled with feelings of self-grandiosity – the so-called sado-masochistic tendency that one sees in Crowley's psychology, and that is so evident in his "excreta," as Crowley liked to refer to his numerous and frequently eccentric writings. Nevertheless, many of Crowley's writings are profoundly interesting, despite a large quantity of ephemera. However, no one less than Nietzsche said that an artist must be judged by his greatest, not by his least, works. Who are we to dispute with Friedrich Nietzsche?

Crowley was admitted to Cambridge University in 1895, after studying chemistry at King's College, London. He initially enrolled to study modern philosophy, but changed his concentration to English literature. He played chess for two hours every day, and even considered becoming a professional chess player. Living lavishly, surrounded by fine furnishings and fine editions of his favourite authors, Crowley poured himself into his studies, studying late into the night. His method of study was quite interesting. He made it his rule to read in any book he read seriously every reference in that book to any other book, thus building up a vast library of mental associations that is clearly displayed in all of his writings. Crowley left the

university with first class honours, but without taking a degree, in 1898, at the age of 22.

Crowley developed a passion for mountaineering; in 1894, he climbed Beachy Head before visiting the Alps and joining the Scottish Mountaineering Club. He climbed in the Bernese Alps, holidaying in the Alps every year from 1894 to 1898. He made the first ascent of the Mönch without a guide in 1897. He climbed with his friend and fellow mountaineer, Oscar Eckenstein, in Mexico in 1900. Together they attempted K2 in India in 1902. Crowley led the ill-fated Kanchenjunga expedition in 1905, which resulted in the death of several people. Over the course of his career, Crowley acquired a reputation as a brilliant, if somewhat reckless, climber, and set a number of world's records.

Crowley's first spiritual experience occurred in the context of a homosexual experience in Stockholm on New Year's Eve, 1896.⁴ Crowley was also sexually active with women, mostly prostitutes, throughout his Cambridge years. In October 1897, he met Herbert Charles Pollitt, president of the Cambridge University Footlights Dramatic Club, with whom he engaged in a sexual relationship, despite its illegality at the time. This association of sexual and spiritual exaltation is a familiar experience to many homosexuals when they "come out." However, he and Pollitt had a falling out due to Crowley's increasing interest in spirituality, something that Crowley regretted till the end of his life.

In October 1897, a brief illness precipitated a spiritual crisis in which Crowley realized the futility of all human effort, the so-

⁴ Crowley referred to this euphemistically as entering the Military Order of the Templars, which makes it sound like a Freemasonic initiation, but most biographers agree that the date is suspect and based on other references of Crowley's, it seems almost certain that this refers to Crowley's first homosexual experience. The Templars were of course accused of practising homosexuality by the Roman Church.

called Trance of Sorrow, and resolved to dedicate his life to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge or gnosis. In March 1898, he read A.E. Waite's *Book of Black Magic and of Pacts* and wrote to the author about a reference he made to the "Great White Brotherhood." Waite referred him to Karl von Eckartshausen's (1752–1803) *Cloud Upon the Sanctuary*. Eckartshausen was a German Catholic mystic, author, and philosopher. Interestingly, Eckartshausen was an early member of Adam Weishaupt's (1748–1830) much mythologized Illuminati (founded May 1, 1776).

It was from Eckartshausen that Crowley learned of the Great White Brotherhood, run by a group of discarnate "Secret Chiefs," also referred to as the "Most Serene Superiors" in the Illuminati. Different traditions use different language but the idea is the same. In the Buddhist Kalachakra the Great White Brotherhood is called "Shambhala." In 1898, Crowley published a limited edition of his first serious book of poetry, *Acel dama: A Place to Bury Strangers In*, which began with the following fascinating preface:

It was a windy night, that memorable seventh night of December, when this philosophy was born in me. How the grave old Professor wondered at my ravings! I had called at his house, for he was a valued friend of mine, and I felt strange thoughts and emotions shake within me. Ah! how I raved! I called to him to trample me, he would not. We passed together into the stormy night. I was on horseback, how I galloped round him in my phrenzy, till he became the prey of a real physical fear! How I shrieked out I know not what strange words! And the poor good old man tried all he could to calm me; he thought I was mad! The fool! I was in the death struggle with self: God and Satan fought for my soul those three long hours. God conquered—now I have only one doubt left—which of the twain was God? Howbeit, I aspire!

Once Crowley read von Eckartshausen, he seriously aspired to communicate with the Secret Chiefs of the Great White Brotherhood, and sent out a psychic appeal for their attention.

Crowley had formulated a positive spiritual intention beyond merely rejecting the religion of his parents. He took his first step on the spiritual path, in what he would refer to as his “great work.” Crowley might refer to this as the “magical will.” A Buddhist might use the term *bodhicitta*. A Hindu might refer to the Power of Truth. Diction differs, but the perennial philosophy is universal.

Almost immediately after his appeal to the Secret Chiefs, Crowley met a chemist named Julian L. Baker in Zermatt, Switzerland in August 1898, who introduced him in London to his brother in law, George Cecil Jones. Both men were members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the *Aurora Aurea*, an occult order, based in London, which had been founded in 1888 by three Freemasons, William Robert Woodman, William Wynn Westcott, and Samuel Liddell Mathers, but it was Mathers who was the real genius of the order and its guiding star. Mathers had translated two books, *The Kabbalah Denudata* (1684) by Knorr von Rosenroth and *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* (1725). The first work on Qabalah constituted the theoretical basis of the Golden Dawn, and Abramelin its major method. Crowley was duly initiated in the first grade of Neophyte on November 18, 1898, taking the motto “*Frater Perdurabo*” (Brother ‘I will endure’), referring to Matthew 24:13, “he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

The Golden Dawn spawned three lodges in England, one in Scotland, and one in France, and was very successful. In 1896, Westcott resigned from the order, leaving Mathers in control, Woodman having died in 1891. However, Mathers’s autocratic personality alienated many members of the inner order, especially after he initiated Aleister Crowley into the grade of Minor Adept in Paris on January 16, 1900. After being rejected by the London members, the membership revolted and removed Mathers as chief of the order at a general meeting held on March 29.

The central practice of the grade of Minor Adept is the Knowledge and Conversation of the “Holy Guardian Angel,” based on *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*. This book tells the story of an Egyptian desert hermit named Abraham or Abramelin, who taught a system of magic to Abraham of Worms (c 1362–c 1458). Mathers’s translation is based on a defective copy of the book, which was retranslated by Georg Dehn and Steven Guth in 2006 (revised 2015).⁵ In the book, which purports to be written in 1458, Abraham imparts the Qabalistic and magical secrets of Abramelin to his son, Lamech. Crowley intended to perform the Abramelin operation even before he was initiated into the grade of Minor Adept⁶ and purchased a house overlooking Loch Ness, called Boleskine, in November 1899, to perform this operation, which requires the aspirant to isolate himself for six months; construct an elaborate temple including a sand-covered terrace, lamp, wand, incense, robes, a square or silver side plate of silver or bee’s wax; observe chastity and sobriety; and pray earnestly twice daily, at sunrise and sunset.

At the culmination of the ritual, the aspirant evokes various demons and binds them to himself as familiar spirits. This enables him to use a variety of magical squares or talismans for various purposes. It took Crowley eighteen months to prepare for the Abramelin Operation, which was to begin at Easter (April 15 in 1900), but Crowley broke it off in March to defend Mathers in the context of the rebellion against his authority. He would not complete the operation till October 1906.

Mathers’s reaction shook the order to its core. Mathers declared that the founding documents of the order were forged, and that he and he alone had formulated a magical link with the

⁵ Steven Guth, trans., *The Book of Abramelin*, ed. Georg Dehn (Lake Worth, FL: Ibis Press, 2015).

⁶ Nevertheless, Crowley refers to himself as an Adept Major at the time of the Cairo Working in *The Equinox of the Gods* (N.p.: O.T.O., 1936), p. 109.

Secret Chiefs, and that he was therefore their sole and exclusive representative. As a result, the order splintered into several competing factions, including one led by Yeats. Several temples remained loyal to Mathers and he was even able to expand into the United States. The last temple of the Golden Dawn, the Smaragdum Thallasses Temple (commonly referred to as Whare Ra), in New Zealand, closed its doors in 1978.

In the wake of Mathers's revelations there were efforts to establish a new magical link with the Secret Chiefs. Dion Fortune believed she succeeded in 1922, and received a text that was published posthumously as *The Cosmic Doctrine* (1949), dictated to her and one Charles Loveday between 1923 and 1925. W.B. Yeats produced a similar volume, entitled *A Vision* (1925), based on his wife's automatic writing (and, later, automatic speaking while asleep) between 1917 and 1920.⁷

Soon after being initiated into the Golden Dawn, Crowley struck up a friendship with Allan Bennett (1872–1923), a truly remarkable man with a reputation as a powerful practical magician. Crowley claimed that Bennett was a master of the so-called “blasting rod,” could repel leeches using breath control (*pranayama*), and was even able to levitate. This is alluded to in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (2014). Bennett also practised Shiva yoga. Later he would convert to Buddhism, become a *thera* in a Burmese Buddhist monastery, and then lead the first Buddhist mission to the West in 1908. He was able to

⁷ Other “channelled” works of the period include the *Book of Dzyan* and *The Voice of the Silence* of H.P. Blavatsky and, possibly, *The Mahatma Letters*, although the authorship of the latter is disputed; *The Cosmic Tradition*, by Alma and Max Theon; *Seven Sermons to the Dead*, by C.G. Jung; the writings of Helena Roerich, wife of the painter Nicholas Roerich; the *Vaimanika Shastra*; etc. I would, however, remind the reader of Crowley's prim warning in *Liber Causae*, 7: “the genuineness of the claim matters no whit, such literature being judged by itself, not by its reputed sources.” This applies equally to the *Book of the Law* and the Holy Books of Thelema, of course.

read the early Buddhist scriptures in the original Pali, wrote two books, *The Religion of Burma* (1911) and *The Wisdom of the Aryas* (1923), and was an associate of the Rhys-Davids's, contributing to the *Buddhist Review*.

Bennett coined the term "Theravada," which was adopted by the World Fellowship of Buddhists in Sri Lanka in the 1950s to designate the non-Mahayana Buddhist tradition. This may surprise some people, since Theravada generally represents itself as the original Buddhist school, but as *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Buddhism* points out, this is historically inaccurate. Bennett suffered from severe chronic asthma and lived in poverty. Crowley invited him to share his luxurious flat at 67-69 Chancery Lane, where Bennett shared his considerable knowledge of Qabalah, magic, and Buddhism with Crowley, training him in the elements of the Great Work. Bennett was a trained analytical chemist, and very familiar with the use of drugs to treat his asthma. Bennett initiated Crowley into the use of drugs to induce altered states of consciousness, which Crowley continued to experiment with and use for the rest of his life as an adjunct to his spiritual practices, with mixed results.

Crowley experimented with ceremonial magic, especially the Enochian calls of John Dee and Kelley, in Mexico in 1900, where he received the highest, 33rd degree in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry from one Don Jesús de Medina-Sidonia, a dissident Freemason and journalist.⁸ This honorary degree is only awarded based on merit. He then travelled to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), where he studied raja yoga with Allan Bennett, achieving the yogic trance state of *dhyana*. After Allan left for Burma (now Myanmar), Crowley travelled

⁸ De Medina-Sidonia established his own Rito Mexicano Reformado in 1890, and was the editor of *El Boazeo*, a Masonic magazine, directed by his brother, Jose M. Medina. Apparently, Medina was quite old in 1900, which may explain why Crowley lost touch with him. Medina's liberal Christian order was progressive, anti-Catholic, and even admitted women.

through India, practising yoga and spending much of his time studying at the Meenakshi Temple in Madura, where he was allowed to sacrifice a goat to Bhavani, a form of Parvati, the Shakti or consort of Shiva, in a “secret shrine,” and working on his poetic defence of Buddhism, *The Sword of Song*, subtitled “the Book of the Beast” (1904). Although this is certainly not the first time that Crowley identifies himself as “the Beast” in his writings, this is his first explicit identification of a book and its philosophy as an expression of his anti-Christian gospel, presaging things to come. Interestingly, the philosophy of “the Beast” in *The Sword of Song* is not Thelema, but Buddhism. This book attracted the attention of no less a figure than G.K. Chesterton, who reviewed it, referring to Crowley as “a good poet.”

Despite all of these varied attainments, by the beginning of 1904 he was weary of magic, which he declared “led nowhere,” and had adopted the attitude of a Buddhist rationalist skeptic. He had married Rose Edith Kelly (1874–1932), the sister of his friend, the painter Gerald Kelly, on August 12, 1903, on a whim, and was living the life of a wealthy Scottish “laird.” Crowley and Rose embarked on a world tour as a honeymoon, passing through Cairo twice. On the outbound trip he and Rose spent the night in the King’s Chamber of the Great Pyramid of Cheops in November 1903, where Crowley invoked the Astral Light using the Preliminary Invocation of the Goetia (his favourite invocation). As a result, the King’s chamber was filled with light, bright enough that Crowley was able to read the remaining text of the ritual without a candle.

Crowley and Rose returned to Cairo in February 1904, where they appeared in the streets of Cairo in a carriage, with two gorgeous runners to clear the way, calling themselves Prince and Princess Chioa (pronounced ‘hawa’) Khan and representing themselves as Asian aristocrats. Crowley notes that he wore a turban with a diamond aigrette, a robe of silk, and coat of gold cloth (he does not mention what Rose wore). *Chioa* is the

Hebrew for ‘beast.’ Crowley did not know it yet, but the karma that he had built up over the previous seventeen years was about to explode.

On March 16, 1904, Crowley recited the Preliminary Invocation of the Goetia, which he had previously recited in the Great Pyramid, in an attempt to show Rose the sylphs, the elemental creatures of the air, originally identified by Paracelsus in the 16th century.⁹ However, instead of seeing the sylphs, Rose spontaneously entered a state of trance,¹⁰ despite having no background in mediumship or clairvoyance, and kept muttering in a dreamy state, “They’re waiting for you.” These were the opening words of an event, which Crowley called the Cairo Working, which he finally deemed to be the supreme spiritual experience of his life. On the 17th, Crowley writes in his diary that they invoked Thoth, the Egyptian god of Wisdom, with great success, and that “Thoth indwells us,” adding, “It’s all about the child. All Osiris.” On the 18th, Rose added that the “waiter” is Horus, whom Crowley had offended and ought to invoke.

⁹ Apparently, Crowley had a facility for evoking elementals. At the German 1925 Weida Conference of Grand Masters during which he was elected O.H.O. of the O.T.O., Crowley was observed by one of the delegates, Eugen Grosche, apparently smiling and nodding to invisible beings in the forest which, it was explained to him, were dwarfs, gnomes, and tree spirits who had come to pay their respects to the master. The following year, Crowley’s secretary, Norman Mudd, sent Grosche, at Crowley’s direction, the magical instructions for the invocation of elemental beings. According to an affidavit by Grosche himself, he performed the experiment in 1928 on the island of Rügen and two gnomes appeared. Unfortunately, I am not aware that this instruction has survived. If so, would be very interesting indeed. See Tobias Churton, *The Beast in Berlin* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2014), pp. 71f.

¹⁰ Crowley unkindly suggested that she was dazed, stupid, drunk, or hysterical from pregnancy.

Rose revealed the skeleton of a ritual, which Crowley subsequently wrote up in his own style. Success was promised for the following Saturday or Sunday, with the promise that he would attain *Samadhi*, the supreme yogic ecstasy.¹¹ The ritual offended Crowley's sense of magical propriety, because it did not include the usual procedures of the Golden Dawn, such as incense, consecration of the magical weapons, preliminary banishing rituals of the pentagram and hexagram, etc.¹² Crowley notes that the ritual seemed to have been written rapidly in an intense or ecstatic state.

Crowley proceeded to test Rose's clairvoyance, if that was what it was, by asking her a series of questions about Horus, which she answered accurately, including two telepathic tests, which she answered correctly. This implies that Rose, or her "control," could read Crowley's mind. Crowley then took Rose to the Egyptian Museum, and asked her to show him Horus. After leading Crowley past several images of the god, she took him directly to the section of the museum that housed an older collection of Egyptian antiquities that had been housed in the Boulaq Museum until it was flooded in 1891, when the collection was moved temporarily to a former royal palace, and then finally to the Egyptian Museum in 1902. In his account of these events, written years later, Crowley confused the Boulaq collection at the Egyptian Museum with the original Boulaq Museum, and refers, incorrectly, to visiting the latter, which no longer existed in 1904.

Rose took Crowley directly to an 8th century BCE Egyptian stele of Ankh-ef-en-khonsu, a Theban priest of the god Mentu (or Montu). Mentu is linked with Horus, and the stele shows

¹¹ Equivalent to the grade of Master of the Temple in Crowley's system.

¹² From a G.D. perspective, this lack of precautions did not exclude negative or distracting influences, including demonic influences, which might have entered the temple and corrupted the result.

two images of Horus, one as a “Winged Sun,” called Behedite, which represents Horus of Edfu, later identified with Ra-Herachte or Ra-Harakhty, “Horus of the Two Horizons,” represented on the stele as a falcon-headed god seated on a throne. Crowley was struck by the coincidence, but when he saw the original catalogue number of the stele, he was amazed. It was 666, the number of the Beast, his own number.¹³

Crowley invoked Horus using the ritual based on the skeleton that Rose had revealed on the Vernal Equinox. In his diary for March 20, he wrote: “Revealed that the Equinox of the Gods is come. Horus taking the throne of the East and all rituals, etc. being abrogated. I am to formulate a new link of an Order with the Solar Force.” In a footnote, Crowley says that he thinks that this information came from Rose herself. Crowley had the inscriptions on the stele translated, and Rose told him that the name of her informant was one Aiwass, which meant nothing to Crowley at the time.

¹³ Crowley was enormously impressed by coincidences like this, believing that they showed evidence of the objective influence of the Secret Chiefs, who (Crowley thought) must have arranged these coincidences for his benefit. It must be remembered that Crowley, as a late 19th century scientific rationalist, thought entirely in terms of late 19th century bourgeois psychology and was really quite conventional (for the time) in many of his opinions. His notion of the unconscious did not go much beyond Freud’s notion of a psychological swamp of repressed appetites and impulses (see *The Equinox of the Gods*, p. 97), despite his spiritual experiences. C.G. Jung had not yet published his essay on synchronicity, “Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle” (1952). Computer scientist and UFO researcher, Dr. Jacques Vallée, has proposed that the universe is structured “associatively,” like a computer hard drive, rather than “sequentially,” as a way of explaining the phenomenon that Jung denominated “synchronicity” (see J. Vallée, *Messengers of Deception* [Brisbane, Au: Daily Grail Publishing, 1979], pp. 237–45). Interestingly, in terms of Crowley’s fascination with Qabalah, Jung and his school share the belief that numbers are archetypes of order and major factors in creating synchronicities.

Rose instructed Crowley to set up the living room of their Cairo flat as a temple, and to enter the room at precisely 12 noon on April 8, 9, and 10, and write down what he heard. This he did with some deference, with Quarto typing paper and Swan fountain pen in hand, and from exactly 12 noon to 1 o'clock Crowley heard a voice emanating from over his left shoulder, from the furthest corner of the room. Crowley says that "the voice seemed to echo itself in my physical heart in a very strange manner, hard to describe," was "passionately poured," and "of deep timbre, musical and expressive, its tones solemn, voluptuous, tender, fierce or aught else as suited the moods of the message. Not bass – perhaps a rich tenor or baritone. The English was free of either native or foreign accent, perfectly pure of local or caste mannerisms, thus startling and even uncanny at first hearing. The effect was thus as if the language were English-in-itself, without any background, such as exists when one hears any one human speak it, and enables one to assign all sorts of attributes to the speaker."

Crowley said that he heard his own thoughts as the voice of Aiwass at several points in the dictation, which he obediently recorded. At one point, he tried to stop writing and was unable to do so. At another point, he briefly lost consciousness.

At the end of the three days, a 65-page manuscript, approximately 5,727 words in length, lay before Crowley. Remember that Crowley says that "The voice was passionately poured, as if Aiwass were alert about the time-limit. ... I was pushed hard to keep the pace." This is pretty clear, yet I appear to be the first, and so far the only, one, as far as I know, to make the obvious calculation that the rate of Aiwass' dictation works out to only 32 w.p.m., which I discuss in my book, *The Secret Wisdom of 666*. It only takes a quick Google search to discover that normal English speaking speed is 150 w.p.m. However, maximum handwriting speed is 34 w.p.m.

The conclusion is that Aiwass spoke at a fifth of normal speaking speed. If this is the case, how did Crowley hear Aiwass' speech as *fast* when in fact it was very, very *slow*?¹⁴ Clearly Crowley's perception of time was distorted, a telltale sign of an altered state of consciousness (ASC). This is confirmed by the aforementioned fact that Crowley heard his own thoughts as the voice of Aiwass. Moreover, despite his claim to hear Aiwass as a voice external to himself, Crowley says that he initially regarded the entire experience as an astral vision, such as he had experienced many times before. Could Crowley not tell the difference between an astral vision and a physical experience? Another relevant consideration is the similarity of the text of the *Book of the Law* to Crowley's own writings, including specific references to Crowley's own insights prior to the dictation of the *Book of the Law*.

The inevitable conclusion from the foregoing is that when Crowley entered the temple on April 8, 9, and 10, he spontaneously experienced an ecstatic visionary state in which he wrote feverishly in an altered state of consciousness what he heard as an internal voice accompanied by a vivid psychic impression of Aiwass' appearance. Years later Crowley himself speculated that this experience may have been facilitated by a boil or sore on his tongue, which he had forgotten about.

Many years later, in November 1925, in Tunis, Crowley wrote the Comment, in fulfillment of I, 36, "lest there be folly, he shall comment thereupon by the wisdom of Ra-Hoor-Khu-

¹⁴ Slowness of *speech* does not necessarily imply slowness of *writing*. Crowley notes that 65 pages of ordinary composition would take him about 10.5 hours, a rate of 545 words per hour, which compares favourably with a professional writing rate of 2,000 words per day, compared to three hours for the *Book of the Law*. This provides further evidence that Crowley's mind was in an intensely concentrated, hyperlucid state during the writing of the *Book of the Law*.

it,”¹⁵ which was subsequently appended to the *Book of the Law*. Paraphrasing, the “Comment” tells the reader that it is their True Will to read the *Book of the Law* once only, then destroy it rather than study it, declaring that not to do so is dangerous. Those who discuss the contents of the *Book of the Law* are to be avoided (similarly, the discussion of religion is forbidden in Freemasonry). All theological questions are to be decided by reference to the writings of Ankh-ef-en-khonsu, referring presumably to Crowley himself, “each for himself,” echoing the last words of the Buddha in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, where he says that all questions of dharma are to be resolved by each individual for himself: “He possesses unwavering faith in the Dhamma thus: ‘Well propounded by the Blessed One is the Dhamma, evident, timeless, inviting investigation, leading to emancipation, to be comprehended by the wise, *each for himself*’” (DN 16, 9; italics added).

However, when one refers to the writings of Aleister Crowley, it is clear from several sources, including at the very end of his life, that Crowley enjoined both the study and discussion of the *Book of the Law*, most clearly and succinctly in the following:

Also one V.V.V.V.V. arose, an exalted adept of the rank of Master of the Temple (or this much He disclosed to the exempt Adepts) and His utterance is enshrined in the Sacred Writings. Such are Liber Legis, Liber Cordis Cincti Serpente, Liber Liberi vel Lapidis Lazuli and such others whose existence may one day be divulged unto you. Beware lest you interpret them either in the Light or in the darkness, for only in L.V.X. may they be understood” (*Liber LXI vel Causae*, 39f.).

¹⁵ The unusual hyphenation suggests an identification of the Solar Falcon with the Egyptian *khu*, the discarnate soul or spirit, i.e., Horus = the True Will. Cf. op. cit., III, 1, where the defective spelling suggests the false self or ego, the inherent division of which is resolved in self-realization.

Liber Causae is Crowley's original introduction to the Holy Books of Thelema. It is noteworthy that all of the Holy Books, including the *Book of the Law*, are grouped together and assigned to the authorship of V.V.V.V.V.,¹⁶ Crowley's own motto as a Master of the Temple. L.V.X. refers to the Latin word for 'light' or 'illumination,' and the number 65 signifies Adonai 'my Lord,' referring especially to the Holy Guardian Angel. The L.V.X. signs also refer to the mystery of life, death, and resurrection, i.e., of the Body of Light, and is part of the mysteries of the grade of Minor Adept as well as Dzogchen Buddhism.

It is clear from the foregoing, and many other things I could quote, and do in *The Secret Wisdom of 666*, that the true exegesis of the *Book of the Law* is intuitive, symbolic, and esoteric, and that Crowley did not undertake this work, at least not in a comprehensively thorough way, but anticipated "a genius to arise who will accomplish all this work for us."¹⁷ Crowley wrote this long after his ostensible successor, Charles Stansfeld Jones, had blown up, so it is clear that Crowley was not referring to Jones.

We are only beginning to understand the *Book of the Law*. Aiwass Himself – whoever He was – declares that Crowley, who tended to interpret the *Book of the Law* literally and politically, would not understand it: "Change not as much as the style of a letter; for behold! thou, o prophet, shalt not behold all these mysteries hidden therein." (I, 54); "This book shall be translated into all tongues: but always with the original in the writing of the Beast; for in the chance shape of the letters and their position to one another: in these are mysteries that no

¹⁶ *Vi Veri Universus Vivus Vici*, "While living, I have conquered the universe by the power of truth," referring to the pan-Indian/Buddhist doctrine of the Power of Truth.

¹⁷ *Magick Without Tears* (1973; rpt. Tempe, AZ: New Falcon Publications, 1994), p. 307.

Beast shall divine” (III, 47).¹⁸ Aiwass warns Crowley not to “seek after this; for thereby alone can he fall from it.” In fact, Crowley *did* seek after it, by performing a magical operation to beget a “magical child.” Thus, Crowley failed to secure an heir, which (he said) was the most important task laid upon him by the Secret Chiefs. This failure weighed heavily upon him for the rest of his life, after Jones’s abortive birth as a Master of the Temple in 1916.¹⁹

Nevertheless, the *Book of the Law* is a powerful and profound meditation on the fundamental premise of Buddhism: the First Noble Truth that all is suffering, suggestive of Tantra. In addition, the *Book of the Law* predicts the imminent advent of world war and civilizational collapse as we transition to a new Age of Man,²⁰ popularly referred to as the Age of Aquarius,

¹⁸ Cf. op. cit., I, 56: “All words are sacred and all prophets true; save only that they understand a little; solve the first half of the equation, leave the second unattacked. But thou hast all in the clear light, and some, though not all, in the dark.” The implication seems to be that prophets are limited in their understanding, including Crowley, who has nevertheless attained the Clear Light or Luminous Mind (*prabhasvara-citta* or *abhasvara-citta*) of Buddha nature, an important concept in Dzogchen, but is limited in his understanding. The implication seems to be that the universal, being Infinite (Nuit), is beyond reason and, like the Tao, cannot be exhausted. Cf. Laozi, 綿綿若存, 用之不勤 (chap. 6). Cf. also *Liber CCXX*, II, 27–34, 76; III, 20, 63, 75.

¹⁹ Crowley himself recognized this in his diary entries between July 12 and 17, 1916: “There is nothing in me that corresponds at all to the grade. There is utter impotence on all planes. ... I am simply unable to act. ... I simply cannot do it” (quoted in John Symonds, *The Beast 666: The Life of Aleister Crowley* [London: Pindar Press, 1997], p. 216), and in 1923 Crowley confided in his diary that he regarded the previous nineteen years of his career as a “magical blunder.”

²⁰ The Anthropocene geological epoch has been proposed to begin in 1945, the year in which the first atomic bomb was exploded.

ruled by the Black Sun,²¹ to succeed the old age of Christianity, corresponding to the Age of Pisces, an age of debilitation ruled by Jupiter and Mercury. There was a general expectation of the advent of a new age around the turn of the century, about two thousand years after Christianity and five thousand years after the advent of the Kali Yuga (1899). H.P. Blavatsky, the founder of Theosophy, had predicted the imminent appearance of a new Messiah (see Appendix I). Blavatsky had declared that the Age of Pisces began in 255 BCE. with an interval of 2,155 years.²²

²¹ Sol, ruler of Leo, and Saturn-Uranus, ruler of Aquarius. The imminent Age of Saturn, the Black Star, is unique in that it rules two signs, Aquarius and Capricorn, the zenith of the zodiac. Capricorn also represents Set, who is both antithetical to and one with Horus.

²² Blavatsky's statement appears to be based on Egyptologist Gerald Massey's (1828–1907) claim that the Age of Pisces began in 255 BCE, at which time (he said) the Winter Solstice passed out of Capricorn into Sagittarius. Thus, the Vernal Equinox left Aries, the Sign of the Ram, and entered Pisces, the Sign of the Fishes. He states that "This date of 255 B.C. was the true day of birth, or rather of re-birth for the celestial Christ, and there was no valid reason for changing the time of the world," which "is the proper date for the commencement of Christianity or equinoctial Christianity." The interval of 2,155 years is also based on Massey. Apparently, these dates are based on the astronomer Cassini (1625–1712). However, Massey does say that the Age of Pisces began in "about" 255 BCE, allowing for some wiggle room, especially since the rate of precession is not a constant, but slowly increasing over time. Following Blavatsky's lead, a more accurate method might be to base the calculation on the *ayanamsa*, or difference between the tropical and sidereal zodiacs, except that here again, there is no consensus, estimated *ayanamsas* varying significantly with no agreement on which one is correct. The most widely accepted *ayanamsa* is the Lahiri, which is the official *ayanamsa* of the government of India for calendrical calculations, although this too has been criticized. The Lahiri (*Chitra Paksha*) *ayanamsa* for January 1, 1900 was 7.53951 degrees. Based on the current IAU value of 1.396887832 degrees per century, the new year of the Age of Aquarius works out to about 2440. Is there anything happening in the 25th century that we should know about? In fact, there is. According to Dr. Alex Berzin, the Tibetan Buddhist Kalachakra prophesies the

This would put the advent of the Age of Aquarius in about 1900. This seems like a blind, however, for the true occult cycle is $30 \times 72 = 2,160$ years, which indicates the year 1906 – the year, interestingly, in which Crowley attained *Samadhi* and thus became the Prophet of the New Aeon of Horus, according to his own assertion.

Aiwass specifically identifies the 1940s as a decade of war, and the appearance of an awesome weapon of mass destruction (WMD) (the first atomic bomb was exploded in 1945), and the 1980s as a decade of debacle. The '80s were of course the decade during which climate change came to international public attention (the International Panel on Climate Change was set up in 1988), culminating in the collapse of communism. The Egyptian god Set, the god of desert heat and storms, will

globalization of dharma and a consequent age of peace, beginning about the year 2424 (some say 2425), just fifteen or sixteen years before the advent of the Age of Aquarius, following a long period of global barbarism and a “war to end all wars.” This is very much along the lines of the *Book of the Law*. This would put the Age of Pisces during the Crisis of the Third Century, when Christianity began to overtake the Roman Empire. (It is widely accepted that the tropical and sidereal zodiacs were within one degree of coincidence during the life of Ptolemy [100–168]. This would put the start of the Age of Aquarius about 2294 [2188–2400].) The Age of Aries would have begun about 1872 BCE, corresponding to the fall of the last Sumerian dynasty. Sumer, which originated about 4500 BCE, was a typical bull-worshipping civilization of the Age of Taurus (c 4020 BCE). Moreover, the interval from 1904 to 2424 is close to five hundred years, which corresponds to the Neptune-Pluto cycle of civilizations, the last occurrence of which was 1891–92, very close to Blavatsky’s original prediction of the Age of Aquarius. One Neptune-Pluto cycle after that is 2385, just 39 years before the manifestation of Shambhala in 2424 and 58 years into the reign of Rudra Chakrin, the last Kalki king. This conjunction of our solar system’s two outermost planets presages a fundamental civilizational change, especially a cataclysmic upheaval leading to a time of transition and uncertainty followed by a great renaissance and a new age.

dominate this period. This period will usher in a new dark age, called the Day of Wrath,²³ which will take several centuries to resolve. In Buddhism this is called the “sword interval” (*satthantarakappa*) or, according to another translation, the “age of science,” when most people will destroy themselves because of their evil karma. We are now living through this age.

Human beings will be so deeply altered that a new species of man will emerge, a vision shared by W.B. Yeats,²⁴ interestingly. Crowley refers to the “kingly men” of the New Age, but although it is easy to construe (or misconstrue) the language of the *Book of the Law* as social Darwinian, Crowley’s self-description of his social philosophy as “aristocratic communism”²⁵ might give us pause. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother denominated the new men as “supermen,” not necessarily in the Nietzschean sense but in a spiritual sense of a physically and psychologically regenerated humanity. Interestingly, the Mother, consort of Sri Aurobindo, who also had a background in Western esotericism, believed she completed this process, begun by Sri Aurobindo, on February 29, 1956, called the “supermental manifestation.” I do not know if Crowley knew of Aurobindo. I suspect he did not; he doesn’t mention him as far as I know, but we can see others similarly, including Blavatsky, Jung, Rudolf Steiner, Gurdjieff, and Krishnamurti, who surprisingly, given Crowley’s criticism of Krishnamurti, Crowley declared to be teaching the Law of Thelema.

²³ *Liber CCXX*, II, 24. Cf. “the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:17). “Day of wrath,” lit. “the burning turning” (Skt. *dah varteat*). Revelation also refers to the time to destroy those who destroy the earth (Rev. 11:18).

²⁴ See Gale Schricker, *A New Species of Man: The Poetic Persona of W.B. Yeats* (1982).

²⁵ See Marco Pasi, *Aleister Crowley and the Temptation of Politics* (Durham, UK: Acumen, 2014), p. 50. Crowley’s philosophy has also been described as “sexual communism.”

Thus, Aleister Crowley was not a false messiah, as Gerald Yorke claimed (and not a term that Crowley used to refer to himself as far as I know), but an authentic prophet in his own right, of a growing movement that continues today in many manifestations, which he called the New Aeon of Horus. We must not allow Crowley's sometimes archaic diction or personal peculiarities to blind us to the recognition of his universality; whatever his defects might have been, he was an authentic magus with a powerful and profound vision and voice in which there is much value, provided we heed the Comment and *Liber Causae* and apply the Key.

It is widely believed that human beings are facing the greatest crisis in their history as a species. The Age of Set will be apocalyptic, characterized by extreme violence and gross immorality.²⁶ Humanity's collective karmic books are about to be balanced. Over the next several hundred years, a new, post-modern, post-industrial civilization will gradually emerge, characterized by refinement, aspiration, regeneration, nobility, cosmic consciousness, Tantric pride, human potential, and individuation. Similarly, the Kalachakra prophesies the manifestation of the "pure land" of Shambhala in the year 2424, resulting in a global, golden age of spiritual and scientific enlightenment. Thelema looks even further forward, to the advent of the Next Age of Ma'at, when humanity will achieve complete self-perfection.²⁷

²⁶ *The Book of the Law* specifically predicts conflict, total war, the discovery of a WMD, cannibalism, torture, irrationality, human sacrifice, autocracy, oppression, militarism, and even slavery. Like it or not, all of this has been seen in the 20th and 21st centuries. Hinduism and Buddhism have similar prophecies.

²⁷ Following the zodiacal attributions, Ma'at, as Libra, is the corollary of the beginning of the current precessional cycle that began with 0 Aries about the beginning of the Common Era. If we take 1904 as the advent of the Age of Aquarius, then the Age of Capricorn/Set will follow about 4064 CE and the Age of Libra/Ma'at about 10,544 CE, corresponding to the points of the zodiac (ascendant, midheaven/

zenith, descendant). Comparable chronologies are presented in Yeats's *A Vision* and H.P. Blavatsky's Theosophy.

II

The Cairo Working and the Book of the Law

By the end of 1903, Aleister Crowley had worked his way through the Christian fundamentalism of his childhood (his “boyhood in hell”); Cambridge University; Swinburnian and Shelleyan poetry; a romantic enthusiasm for the Celtic Church; the magical system of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn; Max Muller’s Sacred Books of the East series; drugs, sex, mountain climbing, big-game hunting, and world travel; modern philosophy; and Buddhism and Yoga. In the course of mastering these varied attainments, he had achieved considerable facility as an outdoorsman, playboy, poet, and intellectual, including a working knowledge of several languages and a deep acquaintance with the customs and cultures of many societies, especially those of the Middle and Far East; the capacity to voluntarily induce “astral visions” so-called and to evoke “spirits” to visible appearance, both with and without the aid of drugs; and the trance state known in Yoga as *dhyana*, consisting of a dissociative state of hyper-lucidity, characterized by vivid eidetic imagery and ecstasy, which he achieved in 1901.

Curiously, Crowley’s reaction to all this was weariness and skepticism, and by 1903 he had largely abandoned his spiritual calling in favour of world travel, leisure, and sport, although he continued to study comparative symbolism with the intention of publishing the Table of Correspondences, referred to (but not included) in his *Collected Works*. His conscious point of view was a combination of rationalism and Buddhism, but his essays

on the subject do not reveal any really deep affinity with the Theravada Buddhism of his mentor and guru, Allan Bennett, and Crowley's personal taste was always to the more exotic, erotic, and ecstatic mysticism of the Tantras. The Golden Dawn he regarded as "leading nowhere."

Rose Edith Kelly

It is in the context of this transitional and perhaps unconsciously perplexed stage of Crowley's career that we approach the Cairo Working, which Crowley himself regarded as the single most spiritual important experience of his life. Crowley had married the Edwardian socialite, Rose Edith Kelly, sister of the painter Gerald Kelly, on a whim, resulting in the ire of Rose's family, who did not approve of Crowley, on August 12, 1903. This date is significant in that it is alluded to in the *Book of the Law* as an important holy day of the Thelemic calendar: "A feast for the first night of the Prophet and his Bride!"

The implication is that Crowley's marriage to Rose had some bearing on subsequent events, in view of the importance ascribed in the Book to the "Scarlet Woman" (in whom "is all power given"), and, in fact, all of Crowley's later high initiations were mediated by female rather than by male psychopomps. Crowley himself states that Rose was his first "true love," and she was to bear his first child. As a honeymoon, the Crowleys embarked on a world tour from Crowley's estate at Boleskine in Scotland via Cairo, during which Crowley shot big game in Ceylon. Rose bore Crowley a daughter, whom he named Nuit Ma Ahathoor Hecate Sappho Jezebel Lilith, on July 28, 1904; hence, Rose became pregnant about All Hallows Eve, 1903. It appears that the pregnancy, possibly complicated by alcohol abuse, brought out an hysterical or hypersensitive strain in Rose's temperament, exacerbated perhaps by the excitement of the honeymoon and regular sexual orgies with a man who was

certainly one of the greatest sexual athletes of the 20th century, at his prime.

Also noteworthy is the fact that, during the outgoing portion of this excursion, Crowley performed his first real Magick in several years. In November, he resolved to show Rose the “astral light.” To this end, they retired to the King’s Chamber of the Great Pyramid of Cheops, where in the inky blackness Crowley recited his favourite invocation, the Preliminary Invocation of the Goetia, which he subsequently made into an invocation of the “Holy Guardian Angel.”

Rose now being about six-months pregnant, the Crowleys returned to Boleskine, once again landing in Cairo, where Crowley rented an apartment in the European quarter near the Egyptian Museum (formerly the Boulaq Museum) under the alias of a Persian prince, Prince Chioa Khan (*Chioa* being Hebrew for ‘Beast’), accompanied by his beautiful English wife. Crowley commonly adopted such disguises for various purposes, in this instance to study Islam, especially Sufism, including the basic religious observances, Arabic Qabalah, and the secrets of the Sidi Aissawa, with a view (never fulfilled) of undertaking a trip (forbidden to infidels) to Mecca.

Resolving once again to entertain Rose as he had done four months before in the King’s Chamber, Crowley recited the Preliminary Invocation of the Goetia with the intention of evoking the “sylphs,” the elementary creatures of the air. However, instead of seeing the sylphs, Rose spontaneously entered an ASC, in which she repeated the sentence, “[t]hey’re waiting for you,” in an intense reverie. This occurred on March 16. On the 17th Crowley repeated the experiment, and Rose entered a similar state, adding, “[i]t’s all about the Child. All Osiris.”

Horus

These remarks irritated Crowley, who did not like to be upstaged, and on Friday the 18th, he tried again. This time, Rose “[r]evealed that the waiter was Horus, whom [Crowley] had offended and ought to invoke.” Rose gave Crowley the skeleton of a ritual that Crowley subsequently wrote up in his own style, and advised him to perform it on the following Saturday or Sunday at 12:30 p.m. before an east or north-facing window without incense and without any special preparation (such as the Preliminary Invocation of the Goetia or the Banishing Rituals of the Pentagram or Hexagram taught in the Golden Dawn), using an unconsecrated sword and other accoutrements.

These instructions violated Crowley’s sense of magical propriety, since they went against the precautions taught in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and (he says) he entered upon them with a decidedly hostile and prejudiced mind. Rose had known that Crowley had “offended” Horus, who (Crowley states) he associated with S.L.M. Mathers, the Chief of the Golden Dawn, who Crowley had come to regard as a “Black Brother,” “the personification of unintelligent violence.” This piqued Crowley’s curiosity enough to test Rose’s clairvoyance, if that is what it was. The Egyptian god Horus might also have been “offended” by Crowley’s Buddhism, which he had adopted only eight months before, and which Crowley himself admits was not heartfelt.

Crowley devised an examination in which he asked Rose to describe Horus’ moral qualities (“force and fire”), the conditions caused by him (a “[d]eep blue light,” which sounds like the astral light described above), his name (presumably in some other form, since she had already revealed him as the “waiter,” but how did she know?), Crowley’s past relations with the god (that he had taken his place during his Neophyte initiation but

never invoked him), his enemy (“Forces of the waters—of the Nile”), his lineal figure, colour, place in the temple, weapon, planet, number, and, most curiously, one of five and one of three completely arbitrary symbols (English letters) that Crowley resolved in his own mind to represent the god. This last test is most interesting, since it strongly suggests a telepathic rapport between Rose’s and Crowley’s minds (with Crowley as “sender”). Rose answered all these questions correctly, the statistical probability of which Crowley put at greater than 1 chance in 21,168,000. This attention to detail is typical of Crowley.

Even had Rose picked up this information from Crowley’s casual conversation about the Tables of Correspondences, this still does not explain the telepathy. In order to further test Rose, Crowley conducted her to the Egyptian Museum, where neither one had ever been, on the 21st of March. Rose led Crowley directly to a glass case on the second floor, bypassing several images of Horus en route, and identified the exhibit as the god before Crowley at least was close enough to discern its contents. The exhibit was the wooden funereal stele of an obscure 26th dynasty Theban priest, Ankh-ef-en-khonsu. The stele portrays Horus in his form of Ra-Hoor-Khuit (Horus the Elder), with red disk; green uraeus; green face; indigo skin; gold necklace, anklets, and bracelets; and blue-black nemyss. He holds a green wand in his left hand; his right hand is empty. His throne consists of an indigo gnomon and a red square. Ankh-ef-en-khonsu is shown worshipping the god wearing a leopard’s skin tunic and a green and gold apron. The background is gamboge. Above are the winged globe of Behedite and the figure of Nuit or Isis, bending down with her hands and feet touching the earth.

Crowley examined the label on the case: it was exhibit No. 666, the number with which he had personally identified since his father’s death, the number of the Beast of the Revelation to John, the Antichrist himself. This coincidence or synchronicity

enormously impressed Crowley, who (he says) obeyed Rose's subsequent instructions with a certain deference. Crowley performed the ritual badly at 12 noon on the 19th, without result. Crowley says he felt very self-conscious in front of an open window facing the street. Rose gave him permission to try again at night, between 10 p.m. and midnight. On the 20th, Crowley repeated the ritual with "[g]reat success," just an hour before the opening of the astrological New Year at 12:58 a.m. (Sol in 0° of Aries).

Crowley kept two diaries of this period. In one, he wrote, "Equinox of Gods—New Christian Rosy Cross. Hoori [Horus] now Hierophant." In the other: "Revealed that the Equinox of the Gods is come, Horus taking the Throne of the East and all rituals, etc., being abrogated." Crowley suggests that this information came through the clairvoyance of Rose, not because of the ritual. Therefore, we really do not know in what the "[g]reat success" consisted, except that after the entry Crowley notes, "I am to formulate a new link of an Order with the Solar Force."

Between March 23 and April 8, Crowley ruminated on these events, had the stele of Ankh-ef-en-khonsu translated by the assistant curator of the Boulaq collection in the Egyptian Museum, wrote a poetic paraphrase of the same, and performed some Qabalistic calculations based on the book. Rose informed Crowley that her informant was not Horus himself, but a being calling itself Aiwass, and on April 7 instructed Crowley to enter the "temple" – the living room of their flat – at precisely 12 noon on April 8, 9, and 10, and write down what he heard, once again (apparently) without any preparation at all. Armed with a Swan fountain pen and quarto typing paper, Crowley obeyed. At the stroke of 12, he heard a voice. This is his account:

I never looked round in the room at any time. The Voice of Aiwass came apparently from over my left shoulder, from the

furthest point of the room. It seemed to echo itself in my physical heart in a very strange manner, hard to describe. I have noticed a similar phenomenon when I have been waiting for a message fraught with great hope or dread. The voice was passionately poured, as if Aiwass were alert about the time limit. I wrote 65 pages of this present essay (at about my usual rate of composition) in about 10 ½ hours as against the 3 hours of the 65 pages of the Book of the Law. I was pushed hard to keep the pace; the manuscript shows it clearly enough. The voice was of deep timbre, musical and expressive, its tones solemn, voluptuous, tender, fierce or aught else as suited the moods of the message. Not bass—perhaps a rich tenor or baritone. The English was free of either native or foreign accent, perfectly pure of local or caste mannerisms, thus startling and even uncanny at first hearing. I had a strong impression that the speaker was actually in the corner where he seemed to be, in a body of ‘fine matter,’ transparent as a veil of gauze, or a cloud of incense-smoke. He seemed to be a tall, dark man in his thirties, well knit, active and strong, with the face of a savage king, and eyes veiled lest their gaze should destroy what they saw. The dress was not Arab; it suggested Assyria or Persia, but very vaguely.

The “Voice” dictated to Crowley for one hour, and then stopped. On the second and third days, it dictated a second and a third time. At 1 p.m. on April 10, 1904, it was finished. Before Crowley lay 65 pages of holograph manuscript in three chapters, approximately six thousand words in length, which Aiwass had told Crowley to call “Book L,” also referred to in the text of the Book itself as “the Book of the Law”: hence, Crowley’s title, *Liber L vel Legis*.

The first thing that strikes one about Crowley’s account is the length of the manuscript. Crowley writes, “[t]he voice was passionately poured, as if Aiwass were alert about the time-limit,” and that “I was pushed hard to keep the pace.” Since Aiwass spoke for exactly three hours, and the Book is about six thousand words, it is a simple matter to calculate the rate of dictation, which Crowley says he heard with his physical ear: it is just about 30 words per minute. Since normal English

speaking speed is 150 words per minute, it is easy to calculate that the rate of dictation was about a fifth of normal speech.

One wonders: How could Crowley have experienced Aiwass' dictation as normal speech? The answer lies in the psychology of the ASC. Time distortion is a sure sign of an ASC or trance state. The supposition that Crowley was actually having a psychic experience of some kind is confirmed by a passage in the Book where Crowley attempted to break off writing but was unable to do so: "O prophet! thou hast ill will to learn this writing. I see thee hate the hand & the pen; but I am stronger." In other words, Aleister Crowley was literally possessed.

Crowley insisted for the rest of his life that he was utterly incapable of writing the sort of prose exhibited in the *Book of the Law* and several phrases and passages of the Book are indeed quite beautiful. However, when the Crowleys returned to Boleskine, Crowley stuck the manuscript in a hole in the loft in order to get it out of his mind. In the third chapter of the *Book of the Law*, we find the following verses:

For perfume mix meal & honey & thick leavings of red wine: then oil of Abramelin and olive oil, and afterward soften & smooth down with rich fresh blood. The best blood is of the moon, monthly: then the fresh blood of a child, or dropping from the host of heaven: then of enemies; then of the priest or of the worshippers: last of some beast, no matter what. This burn: of this make cakes & eat unto me. This hath also another use; let it be laid before me, and kept thick with perfumes of your orison: it shall become full of beetles as it were and creeping things sacred unto me.

Despite the rather barbaric language, these verses may be interpreted esoterically, as in Tantra.²⁸

²⁸ See Alex Berzin, "Tantric Imagery," <https://studybuddhism.com/en/advanced-studies/vajrayana/tantra-theory/making-sense-of-tantra/tantric-imagery>.

Crowley says he did this early in the spring of 1904, after returning home. Shortly afterwards, his estate was plagued for about two weeks by an infestation of an unusual beetle: Crowley described it as one and one-half inches long, with a single horn perhaps an inch or an inch and one-quarter in length, terminating in a small sphere suggesting an eye. Crowley says he never saw any of these beetles outside his property. Crowley sent one of these beetles to the Natural History Museum in London but they could not identify the species; they have subsequently confirmed that the species is not native to Britain.

The obvious question that arises from the foregoing is: Who is Aiwass? Crowley himself went through several distinct phases in answering this question. Crowley says that he originally took Abramelin's phrase, "Holy Guardian Angel," to describe his work because such an absurd phrase would inhibit rational speculation, but by the end of his life Crowley was at pains to assert that the Holy Guardian Angel is a completely objective individual in exactly the same sense as anyone, and perhaps more so. During the course of the Cairo Working itself, Crowley says he regarded Aiwass as an "astral being," such as he had seen many times before. Later, he seems to understand Aiwass as a psychological metaphor for the libido, the unconscious vitality or life force, in both the Freudian and the Jungian senses.

Crowley seriously claimed that the *Book of the Law* and the Cairo Working proves the prime postulate of religion: the objective existence of preterhuman intelligence:

It is not enough to prove, as we easily do, the correspondences between Invocation and Apparition. We must exclude coincidence, telepathy, and subconscious knowledge. Our praeter-human Intelligence must convey a Truth not known to any human mind, past or present. Yet this Truth must be verifiable. There is but one document in the world which presents evidence that fully satisfies these conditions. This is Liber AL vel Legis the Book of the Law of this New Aeon of Horus, the Crowned and Conquering Child, the

aeon whose Logos is THE BEAST 666, whose name in the Outer Order was FRATER PERDURABO.

In summary, Crowley's argument is that Aiwass proves his objectivity by controlling objective events over which Crowley had no control in such a way as to demonstrate his influence (e.g., the numeration of the stele of Ankh-ef-en-khonsu); encoding a secret literal-numerical cipher in the manuscript of the *Book of the Law* (based principally on the numbers 31, 93, and 418), which was written spontaneously and without conscious calculation; accurately predicting future events; his philosophical profundity and accurate depiction of the character of the 20th century; and the teleological coherence of all these proofs. In addition, what does Aiwass say of himself? Only that he is "the minister of Hoor-paar-kraat," the silent polarity of Horus who Crowley tells us is identical with the dwarf-god and an image of the True Self. Thus, Aiwass himself implies his identity with Crowley's True Self.

In recent years, the evidence for the essentially energetic and probabilistic character of "matter"; the transpersonal dimensions of human consciousness, including the phenomena of "superconsciousness" and psi; the existence of unconscious personalities that are independent of the ego; the objective reality of a vast collective shared consciousness underlying ego-consciousness; the post-mortem survival of the human personality and *samsara*; the capacity of the psyche to "relativize" the phenomenal, spatio-temporal matrix of human experience; and the virtual certainty that non-human civilizations, whose science must be thousands or even millions of years ahead of our own, exist, has become incontrovertible and has changed humanity's fundamental understanding of the nature of reality.

The debate is no longer scientific but ideological, in which the advocates of scientism have replaced the inquisitors of the middle ages. In this light, Crowley's work appears both comprehensible and progressive. From this point of view, it no

longer matters whether the words of the *Book of the Law* originated in the mind of Aleister Crowley, for the mind of Aleister Crowley is as ontologically given as any other natural phenomenon. What matters is that these words originated in conjunction with Crowley's ultimate realization of his own essential ground, which is the Self of the universe and therefore universal. It is precisely this realization that made Crowley the prophet of the New Aeon,²⁹ and which makes anyone who achieves it a "star."

²⁹ Lit. 'vital force, life, long life, eternity,' from PIE *aiw* (cf. AIWAZ). Its modern sense is equivalent to Sanskrit *kalpa*, and can be used to refer to a period of a billion years. Four aeons make up the earth's history: Hadean, Archean, Proterozoic, and Phanerozoic, the last of which began about 541 m.y.a. Plato uses the word to denote the eternal world of ideas. The Greek New Testament may use the word to denote a millenium of a thousand years. "Aeon" may also be used to denote omnipotent beings (i.e., gods). In Gnosticism, the emanations of God are referred to as Aeons, a.k.a. "sonships," "numbers and sounds," and "syzygies." In the Greek Magical Papyri the "Aion" is "the All," the supreme divine aspect. Aion is a Hellenistic deity associated with unbounded time; the orb or cycle encompassing the universe, represented as a nude or semi-nude young man; and the zodiac. Aion is a god of the ages associated with the afterlife in the mystery religions, also referred to as *Aevum* or *Saeculum*. Typically he accompanies an earth or mother goddess. Crowley uses the term to refer to the three aeons (or eons) of the human historical period, beginning about 3102 BCE, corresponding (in approximate chronological order) to Matriarchy, Patriarchy, and the Age of the Absolute Individual, which he called "the Aeon of Horus."

III

The System and Structure of the A∴A∴

Splendidly superb is the future,
Brilliant with the joy of being
Celestially alive
Beists of the endless
Bottomless
Abyss of the outer never no end endless
Kingdom of The Eternal ETERNAL BEING
The BEIST OF BEISTS.....

Sun Ra, from “The Irresistible Thought”

The Three Schools of Magick

To understand the A∴A∴ one must understand its context. According to Aleister Crowley, there are three fundamental views of “the science of the incommensurables,” which he denominated Magick. These are three main schools of philosophical practice, which present three distinct but contrary theories of the universe, and correlative practices of spiritual science. Crowley compares the magical formula of each to a mathematical theorem. Crowley denominates these as Yellow, Black, and White, specifically denying any racial implication.

Interestingly, Crowley notes that the Black and White Schools are in a perpetual struggle, which (he says) was coming to a head when he was writing (c 1924?), referring presumably to the so-called Nazi school. The Yellow School stands aloof from

all such disputes.³⁰ The Three Schools are associated with the grade of Magus of the A∴A∴, which we will discuss shortly, but Crowley hints that these three schools are different expressions of one ultimate unity.

The Yellow School accepts the universe as it is, and practises non-resistance and detachment: “The ideal reaction to phenomena is one of perfect elasticity.” Therefore, Crowley identifies the Yellow School with the contemplative attitude, including the philosophies of Zeno, Epicurus, and Pythagoras in the West, and Laozi in the East. Crowley had enormous reverence for the *Tao Te Ching*, and paraphrased the classic translation of James Legge in order to bring out the meaning of the text better. I have carried this work forward in my own etymological translation from the original Chinese, which is available in my book, *The Good Path of Laozi*, published by Eonic Press. The essential method of the Yellow School is **adjustment**.

The Black School of Magick, not to be confused with black magic or sorcery or with the Black Brotherhood (see below concerning the grade of “Babe of the Abyss”), is distinguished from the Yellow School by its absolute renunciation of existence, most familiar to us as the First Noble Truth of the Buddha that “everything is sorrow,” but also implicit in Hinduism. The noted Pali translator, Bhikku Bodhi, goes so far as to state that early Buddhism was dualist,³¹ which Crowley clearly considers evil (“the Accursed Dyad,” “the Wrong of the Beginning”). The goal of Buddhism therefore is nirvana ‘annihilation’ or ‘cessation,’

³⁰ Similarly, in *Magick in Theory and Practice*, Chapter I Crowley identifies the three main theories of the universe as Dualism, Monism, and Nihilism. These may be roughly identified with the Black, White, and Yellow Schools respectively.

³¹ “Dhamma and Non-duality,” 1998, https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/bps-essay_27.html.

characterized by the attainment of emptiness,³² in which ignorance (*avidya*), suffering (*duhkha*), and cyclicality (*samsara*) are themselves recognized as being essentially illusory. The apotheosis of the Black School in the West is the philosophy of Schopenhauer. The essential method of the Black School is **renunciation**.

According to Crowley, Buddhism culminates in Tantra, based on the realization that suffering itself is illusory and therefore ultimately negligible (Lama Kyentse Norbu's "renunciation of renunciation"). Thus, through the practice of Tantra or, more properly, Vajrayana, the experience of suffering is directly transmuted into joy. This adumbrates the formula of the White School, which Crowley identifies with the philosophies of Spinoza and Nietzsche³³ in the West, as well as the legend of Dionysus, ancient Egyptian religion, the Zoroaster of the Chaldean Oracles, and the Rosicrucians. This is the tradition with which Crowley identifies the A∴A∴, and (Crowley says) is most perfectly expressed in the Holy Books of Thelema, which Crowley wrote in an ecstatic state of absorption (*samadhi*). The essential formula of the White School, as of Vajrayana, is **transmutation**.

Interestingly, Crowley declares H.P. Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Society, to be an agent, not of the Black School, with which she appeared to identify herself as a Buddhist, but of the Yellow School, with the dual mission of destroying Christianity on the one hand and scientific materialism on the other, along with Poincaré, Einstein, Whitehead,³⁴ Bertrand Russell, and, of course, Crowley himself, who clearly saw himself as Blavatsky's successor, despite his criticism of Theosophy. I myself have carried this work forward

³² Cognate terms include *sunyata*, *Ein Sof*, the Infinite, Infinity, Space, Infinite Space, void, voidness, vacuity, the Not (LA), nothing, nothingness, zero, mystery, Tao, etc.

³³ Interestingly, Sri Aurobindo also admired Nietzsche.

³⁴ *Process and Reality*.

in my books *The Secret Wisdom of 666* and *The Keys of El*, published by Eonic Press under the pseudonym of Max Demian (*The Keys of El* is still in preparation). Crowley saw the Law of Thelema and thus the new spiritual dispensation that he referred to as “the new aeon” itself as the unification of the Yellow, Black, and White Schools.

The Cloud Upon the Sanctuary

Aleister Crowley’s spiritual life began virtually at birth. He was raised in the extreme Plymouth Brethren sect of his parents, regarded now as a cult, and severely bullied in the Christian schools approved by the sect. The family took a special interest in the revelatory text of the Book of Revelation. After Crowley’s father died of cancer of the tongue when Alex was 11, Crowley found himself turning against the religion of his parents and he became intensely interested in the figure of Satan. As a young man, he became fascinated by the “unpardonable sin,” and earnestly sought to perform it, but no one seemed to know what it was.

In the course of his early research into black magic and sorcery, Crowley read Arthur Edward Waite’s *Book of Black Magic and of Pacts* (1898). An obscure reference by Waite to a mysterious school of initiates prompted Crowley to write to the author, who referred him to Karl von Eckartshausen’s (1752–1803) *The Cloud Upon the Sanctuary* (1793). Von Eckartshausen was a Bavarian Catholic mystic, author, and philosopher. Von Eckartshausen was for a short time a member of the Illuminati. Crowley credited this book with drawing his attention to the notion of a “great white brotherhood” (referring to the White School of Magick, not the white race) of “Secret Chiefs” or “preterhuman intelligences” who secretly direct the destiny of the world, in effect a secret illuminated government of the world.

The idea squares with the Taoist notion of “immortals”³⁵ and is also found in Tibetan Buddhism. If there is such a thing as enlightenment, it must be ontological, not merely psychological. In infinite time, somewhere in the multiverse there must be beings that have attained perfection. Moreover, if there are such beings, they must be supremely wise and powerful. Crowley credited the book with his desire to contact this order of beings.

Crowley subsequently incorporated his own revision of *The Cloud Upon the Sanctuary* into the “official instructions of the A∴A∴,” where he denominated it *Liber XXXIII*, an official publication of the A∴A∴ in Class C. According to this document, the A∴A∴ is a universal and globally disseminated illuminated community and an interior school that is instructed in the knowledge of nature and humanity directly by the Spirit of Wisdom. There is also an exterior school, the symbols, ceremonies, and rites of which express the interior spirit of truth. The essential activity of the A∴A∴ is building a temple through human evolution through which a future divine reign of light may manifest. The interior order is coterminous with human origins.

However, with the passage of time exterior orders increased because of the weakness of humanity. Thus, external sacramental worship began, with differences originated in customs, capacity,

³⁵ The *xian* (仙), or Taoist immortals, have been compared with the Indian rishis who exhibit similar traits. The Eight Immortals are a group of legendary *xian*, mostly born in the Tang (618–907) or Song (960–1279) dynasty. They are said to live on five islands in the east Bohai Sea, on the east coast of mainland China, are associated with the Complete Realization (*Qanshen*) school of Taoism, and are depicted in the Eternal Joy Temple (*Yongle Gong*) in Ruicheng. The Eight Immortals have been linked with the initial development of *qiqong*, especially the exercise known as the Eight Piece Brocade. Crowley identified with Ge Xuan (164–244), the reputed author of the *Classic of Purity* (*Qingjing Jing*) and the founder of Lingbao Taoism, which Crowley paraphrased, who is a being of this type.

climate, and receptiveness, resulting in the appearance of external religions, worship, ceremonies, and sacred books. Thus, the perfection or imperfection of religion is directly related to its correspondence with esoteric truth, often referred to as the perennial philosophy. In addition to their spiritual work, the masters of the A.:A.: have engaged in political activity, especially Muhammad (570–632),³⁶ Luther (1483–1546), and Aleister Crowley (1875–1947) himself. Interestingly, Crowley explicitly acknowledges that the A.:A.: includes “members from more than one world.”

Liber Causae vel LXI, a Class D publication, was used by Crowley as an introduction to the Holy Books of Thelema. Crowley used the “lection” as an introduction to be read to a candidate for admission to the A.:A.: The lection is read and the candidate allowed a short time to reflect, after which he must decide whether to join the order. Should he decline, he can never again be considered for admission. Having accepted, he cannot resign. No oaths are exacted; no threats, veiled or explicit, made. The candidates are simply bound by their word.

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn

The Golden Dawn was based on some enciphered documents that purportedly had belonged to Kenneth R.H. Mackenzie, a Masonic scholar. These are supposed to have been passed onto Westcott from A.F.A. Woodford, in February 1886. The cipher documents were written in the Trithemius cipher, based on the *Polygraphia* (1518), the first published work on cryptography, and contained the skeleton of an initiatory system, and the name and address of one Anna Sprengel, a German Rosicrucian, who

³⁶ Interestingly, the Kalachakra also dates the manifestation of Shambhala from the advent of Islam in 624, corresponding to the Battle of Badr on March 13. Muhammad is of course the *al-Insan al-Kamil* of Sufism, the true spiritual interpretation of Islam, as Gnosticism is of Christianity and Qabalah of Judaism.

claimed to be in touch with the Secret Chiefs. Westcott said he wrote to Sprengel and obtained permission to establish a lodge in England. On this basis, Westcott and the others founded the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

S.L. Mathers wrote up the initiatory rituals. The structure of the Golden Dawn was based on the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, an esoteric Christian Rosicrucian order formed by Robert Wentworth Little in 1865, and the Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross, a German Rosicrucian organization founded in the 1750s by Hermann Fichtuld, a Freemason and an alchemist. The order was very successful with over a hundred members and attracted such luminaries as Allan Bennett, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Dion Fortune, Maud Gonne, Evelyn Underhill, A.E. Waite, and W.B. Yeats (1865–1939). Yeats, widely regarded as the greatest English poet of the 20th century, declared that without the benefit of the Golden Dawn he could not have written his best poetry.

Sprengel was then supposed to have died in 1890 and her disapproving colleagues refused to provide any more help. In 1892 Mathers claimed to have established a magical link with the Secret Chiefs of the Order, on the basis of which he added an inner, Rosicrucian order to the Outer Order of the Golden Dawn called the Rosae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis (R.R. et A.C.), with three new grades of adeptship, together with new instructions obtained by Mathers's wife, Moina, sister of Henri Bergson, the vitalist philosopher, interestingly based on a process not unlike the Ouija board. Mathers pointed to this influx of knowledge as proof of his authority. These instructions have since been published by Israel Regardie, and include over a thousand pages of material, including the magical alphabet, divination, spiritual development, ritual, magic, Tarot, and the Enochian system of John Dee and Edward Kelley. In short, the Golden Dawn system is a synthesis of the entire Western esoteric tradition with a strong emphasis on theurgy.

Overview of Aleister Crowley's Spiritual Path

Crowley joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn on November 18, 1898 as the result of a chance meeting with one Julian Baker in Zermatt, Switzerland. Baker was a practising alchemist. He introduced Crowley to George Cecil Jones who, recognizing Crowley's potential, introduced him to Samuel Liddell Mathers, the Chief of the Golden Dawn. Crowley was initiated in the grade of Neophyte, taking the motto *Frater Perdurabo*, referring to Matthew 24:13, "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

Crowley made rapid progress in the order, beginning with the study and practice of ceremonial magic and the Goetia, including astral projection.³⁷ This is a remarkable achievement, considering the Buddha's declaration that astral projection is a *siddhi* only attainable by one who has reached the Fourth *Dhyana*, technically equivalent to the attainment of the rank of Arhat. This implies that Crowley was an eighth stage bodhisattva

³⁷ "Astral Projection" so-called is a generic term that may refer to a continuum of experiential practices, ranging from "active imagination" (Jung) to lucid dreaming, the formulation of the Body of Light, Journeying and Srying in the Spirit Vision, and Rising on the Planes. Realistic and intense eidetic visions may be experienced with or without the sensation of actual separation from the body. Crowley induced the visions recorded in *The Vision and the Voice* by concentrating his attention on a magical stone. The author has experienced visions both in the body as well as in having a realistic physical experience in which he felt himself to be literally slipping out through the feet of the physical body. Crowley frequently refers to astral projection as though it can be shared with others and actually results in communication at a distance, including perceptions of physical objects and locations that would today be called "remote viewing." Buddhist Dzogchen regards the formulation of the Body of Light, a.k.a. the Yogic Body, Rainbow Body, etc., as the highest spiritual accomplishment, and Tibetan Buddhism includes instructions for lucid dreaming.

at least, referred to as “Immovable.” Crowley notes that he was born with at least three marks of a Buddha, viz., being tongue-tied or dumb, which necessitated an operation to sever the *fraenum linguae*; having phimosis, or a “well retracted male organ”; and having four hairs in the shape of a swastika on his heart.

Over the course of the next six years, Crowley studied chemistry, modern philosophy, and English literature; wrote and published poems and poetry collections; studied and began to practise the Sacred Magick of Abramelin the Mage; and became involved in a schism that nearly destroyed the Golden Dawn. He met Allan Bennett, who tutored Crowley in magic and Qabalah and eventually led the first Buddhist mission to the West in 1908, as well as received the honorary grade of Sovereign Grand Inspector General 33rd degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry in Mexico, apparently based on his Qabalistic knowledge, and he began to study and practise the Enochian “angelic magic” of John Dee and Edward Kelley.

Crowley practised visualization, ‘fixation’ (*dharana*), and the Assumption of God Forms, as well as mantra yoga, *raja* yoga, and the Buddhist practice of mindfulness (*mahasatipatthana*), with Allan Bennett, under the direction of Ponnambalam Ramanathan, the Solicitor General of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), and one Lama Sayadaw Kyong, a Tibetan Buddhist, and finally experienced the Cairo Working in March and April 1904 as a result of the spontaneous mediumship of his wife, Rose Edith Kelly, which resulted in his attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel,³⁸ AIWAZ, who dictated to him the text of the notorious *Book of the Law*, which

³⁸ The term “Holy Guardian Angel” is more or less synonymous with Adonai, Augoeides, Daimon, Genius, True Self, Real Self, the unconscious or subconscious, and even libido, which itself has at least two distinct senses.

predicts general civilizational collapse and the imminent advent of a new spiritual civilization based on a philosophy of the absolute individual (the so-called “kingly” or divine³⁹ man), after a period of barbarism.

Over the next few years, Crowley’s emphasis increasingly shifted from magic to spirituality. He studied the *Tao Te Ching*, attained *nirvikalpa samadhi* (‘absorption without self-consciousness’) at the end of 1906, and passed through the Ordeal of the Abyss, which constituted him a Master of the Temple, on the basis of which he reconstituted the Golden Dawn as the A∴A∴ with George Cecil Jones and began to promulgate the Great Work in his biannual periodical, *The Equinox*.⁴⁰ Between 1907 and 1911 he wrote the Holy Books of Thelema, referred to as the Official Publications of the A∴A∴ in Class A, spontaneously and at will, including:

- Liber B vel Magi sub Figura I* (1911)
- Liber Liberi vel Lapidis Lazuli, Adumbratio Kabbalae Aegyptiorum sub Figura VII* (1907)
- Liber Porta Lucis sub Figura X* (1907)
- Liber Trigrammaton sub Figura XXVII* (1907)
- Liber Cordis Cincti Serpente sub Figura LXV* (1907)
- Liber Stellae Rubeae sub Figura LXVI* (1907)
- Liber Tzaddi vel Hamus Hermeticus sub Figura XC* (1911)
- Liber Cheth vel Vallum Abiegni sub Figura CLVI* (1911)
- Liber Arcanorum των ATU του TAHUTI Quas Vidit Asar in Amenti sub Figura CCXXXI Liber Carcerorum των Qliphoth cum suis Geniis* (1907)
- Liber A’ash vel Capricoroni Pneumatici sub Figura CCCLXX* (1911)
- Liber Tau vel Kabbalae Trium Literarum sub Figura CD* (1907)
- Liber DCCCXIII vel Ararita sub Figura DLXX* (1908)

Other books that include some Class A material are:

³⁹ English “king” may be related to a prehistoric Germanic word meaning “the descendent of a divine race.”

⁴⁰ Fourteen books identified as *The Equinox* were published by Crowley during his lifetime (1909–1944), with another seven published posthumously.

Liber CCCCXVIII: Liber XXX Aerum vel Saeculi, Being of the Angels of the Thirty Aethyrs the Vision and the Voice (1909)

Liber CDXV: Opus Lutetianum (1914)

Liber DCCCCLXII: ΘΗΣΑΥΡΟΥ ΗΙΔΩΛΩΝ (1910)

According to Crowley, “Class ‘A’ consists of books of which may be changed not so much as the style of a letter: that is, they represent the utterance of an Adept entirely beyond the criticism of even the Visible Head of the Organization.” That is to say, they are the inspired product of Crowley’s *neshamah*, and are thus beyond rational criticism, even by Crowley himself. The *neshamah* (lit. ‘breath’) is the Qabalistic term for that aspect of the soul that pertains to *binah* (see below on the Tree of Life), the animating principle given to man by God, cognate with the trans-Himalayan notion of *prana* or *qi*, corresponding to the grade of Master of the Temple. Interestingly, *Liber I* was originally a Class B document, but was changed by Crowley to Class A in 1913. *Liber LXI* was originally Class A, then changed to B and finally to D. Finally, Crowley wrote one final Class A document, a short, 104-word document called the Comment, in Tunis in 1925. This somewhat controversial document forbids the study and discussion of the *Book of the Law*, upon pain of shunning, which has been subject to a variety of interpretations by Thelemites. This cryptic document is the central focus of my book, *The Secret Wisdom of 666*.

The Philosophy of Scientific Illuminism

Aleister Crowley coined the term “scientific illuminism” when he launched *The Equinox* periodical in March 1909 and subtitled it “The Review of Scientific Illuminism” with the motto “The Method of Science – the Aim of Religion.” Crowley published two large volumes of what was essentially a journal every year for the next five years, featuring an analysis and digest of spiritual theories and practices drawn from multiple sources, many of which were published as official publications of the A∴A∴. The orientation of *The Equinox* was originally pragmatic,

universalist, and non-sectarian, reflecting Crowley's training at King's College and Cambridge University in scientific naturalism. *The Equinox* was based on the premise that all religions are historically, culturally, geographically, and psychologically contingent deviations from one universal underlying ur spirituality, with varying degrees of fidelity. This ur spirituality Crowley identified with Illuminism, thus allying Scientific Illuminism with the Illuminati.

The name usually refers to the Bavarian Illuminati, an enlightenment era secret society founded by Adam Weishaupt (1748–1830) and four students on May 1, 1776. May 1 as the date of the founding of the society is interesting. It is the traditional day of Beltane (lit. 'lucky fire'), associated with the beginning of summer, known as Walpurgis, associated with witches and fairies. May Day was celebrated in ancient Rome as the Floralia, the festival of Flora, the goddess of flowers, which opened with theatrical performances, and concluded with sports and spectacles including a sacrifice to the goddess. A nocturnal dramatic festival, known as the Orgies, associated with the mysteries of Dionysus and Aphrodite, was held about this time every three years. This inaugurated a thirty-day period of all-night revels. More recently, it has become associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Weishaupt founded the Illuminati in order to promote the ideals of the enlightenment, and as an alternative to Freemasonry. It was originally called the Covenant of Perfectibility, or Perfectibilists, taking the owl of Minerva perched on a book as their symbol. Weishaupt considered calling it the Bee order. The early order had three grades, Novice, Minerval, and Illuminated Minerval, with a ruling council called the Areopagus. Similarly, the government of Crowley's O.T.O. included a Minerval grade and an Areopagus council. Weishaupt claimed to serve the "Most Serene Superiors" or "Unknown Superiors"; promoted a

liberal rationalist state run by philosophers and scientists,⁴¹ and a new, “illuminated” Freemasonry; and opposed organized religion, especially the Roman Church.

The Equinox was subtitled “the Official Organ of the A.:A.:” and published various instructions authorized by the order, divided into four classes: A, B, C, D, and E.

Class A consists of books of which may be changed not so much as the style of a letter; that is, they represent the utterance of an Adept entirely beyond the criticism of even the Visible Head of the Organization;

Class B consists of books or essays which are the result of ordinary scholarship, enlightened and earnest;

Class C consists of matter which is to be regarded rather as suggestive than anything else;

Class D consists of the Official Rituals and Instructions;

Class E consists of public announcements and broadsheets.

There are over one hundred such publications, a few of which have not survived.

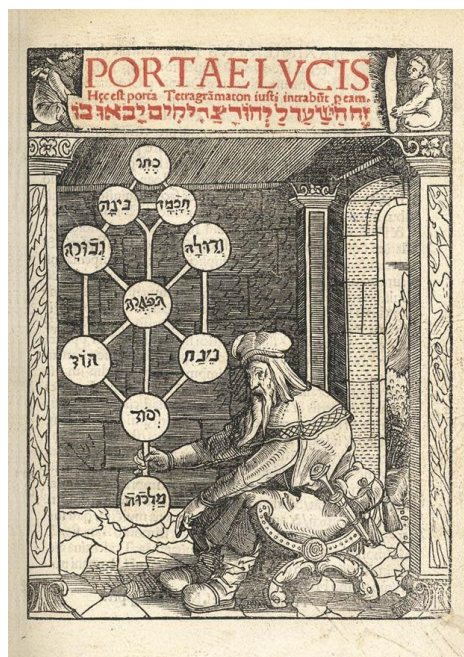
What Does “A.:A.:" Stand For?

Crowley never revealed what the letters “A.:A.:" stood for, though various theories hold that it stands for “Argentum⁴² Astrum,” Latin for “Silver Star” (the same as the Supreme Order of the S.S. or “Silver Star”); “Astron Argon” or “Aster Argos,” Greek for “Silver Star”; “Arikh Anpin,” Hebrew for “long face” or “extended countenance”; “Arcanum Arcanorum,” Latin for “Secret of Secrets”; “Angel and the Abyss”; or

⁴¹ Cf. “scientific socialism.”

⁴² Sometimes spelled “Argenteum.”

“Atlantean Adepts.” The Greek version is generally held to be correct, based on two references by Crowley, although the Latin equivalent form is probably the most commonly used.



Woodcut from Joseph Gikatilla, *Portae Lucis*, 1516. Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica Collection (*Embassy of the Free Mind*, Amsterdam). Public domain.

The Tree of Life and the A∴A∴

The basis of the A∴A∴ system of study and progress is the Qabalistic diagram called the Tree of Life (*Etz Chaim*). It was also the basis of the system of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. It consists of ten *sefirot* (lit. ‘emanations’). The diagram is arranged vertically in three triangles and seven planes, and horizontally in three columns or pillars (see diagram). The *sefirot*, nodes, or spheres represent archetypes or aspects of existence, the divine, and the human psyche with various macrocosmic and microcosmic correspondences. According to scholars the essential concept originated in 9th century BCE

Assyria, but the specific diagrammatic form of the Tree of Life as it is known today is attributed to the cover illustration of a book called *Porta Lucis* ('Gates of Light') in 1516, created by Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522), a German Catholic humanist and Greek and Hebrew scholar, a title that Crowley chose for one of his Holy Books.

The Tree of Life can be understood as a series of ten successive emanations out of the *Ein Sof* (lit. 'Infinity'), corresponding to the first ten numbers of the decimal system, the nature of the *sefirot* corresponding to the symbolic associations of the corresponding numbers. These were originally named after divine qualities, including Crown, Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Kindness, Severity, Beauty, Eternity, Splendor, Foundation, and Kingship, and are attributed to the planets in the Ptolemaic geocentric model of the solar system: Primum Mobile, Fixed Stars, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Luna, and Earth. The numbers are joined by lines, vectors, rays, or "paths," corresponding to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, in order, which are attributed to the elements, planets, and signs of the zodiac, etc.⁴³ The mathematical relationships between the *sefirot* and the paths are believed to be significant, and have been the subject of considerable exploration and study over the centuries. Understood in this way, the Tree of Life appears as a cosmogony in which the cosmos or universe develops as an increasingly complex unfolding and differentiation of an original, essentially mysterious and unknowable principle, the *Ein Sof*, which is nonetheless the essence of all.

More pertinent from our perspective, however, is a complementary understanding in which one proceeds from the bottom up rather than from the top down, rather like the Buddhist doctrine of interdependent origination (*pratityasamutpada*). Understood in this way, the Tree of Life

⁴³ See Aleister Crowley, *Liber 777*.

becomes a model of spiritual development, a ladder of progressive enlightenment, in which one begins at the lowest *sefirah* and works one's way up the Tree through a series of stages which corresponds to a process of personal spiritual and psychological awakening, development, exploration, purification, refinement, and enlightenment, culminating in the realization of the true or divine Selfhood which is God. This is not so different from the ten stages of bodhisattvahood in Buddhism.

10 – the body, the illusory physical envelope (*nefesh*)⁴⁴

9 – the unconscious self – reflex actions, circulation, breathing, digestion, etc.

8 – reason

7 – desire

6 – the conscious self; imagination

5 – will

4 – memory⁴⁵

3 – the soul, the receptive self (*neshamah*)

2 – the ego, the active self (*chayah*)⁴⁶

1 – the divine self; the divine ego⁴⁷ (*yechidah*)⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Lit. 'living being.'

⁴⁵ 9–4 correspond to the *ruach* (lit. 'wind') in the Hebrew system.

⁴⁶ Lit. 'life.'

⁴⁷ Based on Aleister Crowley, "Liber LVIII, Including an Essay Upon Number," Part I, Sect. III.

⁴⁸ Lit. 'singularity.'

The Grades of the A∴A∴

The grades of the A∴A∴ follow the grades of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, and the Order of the Golden and Rosey Cross, as follows:

A∴A∴	Golden Dawn	S.R.I.A.	O.G.R.C.
Ipsissimus	Ipsissimus		
Magus	Magus	Magus	Magus
Magister Templi	Magister Templi	Magister	Magister
(Babe of the Abyss)			
Adeptus Exemptus	Adeptus Exemptus	Adeptus Exemptus	Adeptus Exemptus
Adeptus Major	Adeptus Major	Adeptus Major	Adeptus Major
Adeptus Minor	Adeptus Minor	Adeptus Minor	Adeptus Minor
(Dominus Liminis)	Portal		
Philosophus	Philosophus	Philosophus	Philosophus
Practicus	Practicus	Practicus	Practicus
Zelator	Theoricus	Theoricus	Theoricus
Neophyte	Zelator	Zelator	Juniorus
Probationer	Neophyte		
Student			

The Work and Tasks of the A∴A∴

Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of the A∴A∴ is the sophisticated complex of tasks that Crowley assigned to the grades, based on his wide reading and experience, and the stringency with which he enforced the criteria of advancement within the order. He was more of an anti-guru than a guru. He brooked no laggards. I am only aware of four other individuals who attained the grade of Master of the Temple of the A∴A∴, which is of course the ostensible goal of initiation, to join the Supreme Order of Secret Chiefs. The following collates “One Star in Sight,” *Liber Collegii Sancti*, *Liber Graduum Montis Abiegni*, and *Liber Viarum Viae*. Each grade is characterized by the work

of the grade and the tasks required to ascend to the next stage in a progressively more subtle, refined, and demanding hierarchy. To explain them all in detail would go beyond the scope of this essay. In the following summary, I have shown the *sefirot* and Hebrew letters in parentheses to indicate the correspondences to the Tree of Life for those who might wish to make a comparison.

The Outer Order

Student. General comparative study based on a comprehensive reading curriculum. The subsequent grades also include memorization exercises and intellectual study throughout.

Probationer. The practice of the Magical Record.

Neophyte (*Malkuth, Taw*). Memorization of the system of correspondences. Assumption of God Forms. Vibration of Divine Names (mantra yoga). Rituals of banishing and invoking. Divination. Formulation of the Body of Light. Journeying in the Spirit Vision (astral projection).⁴⁹

Zelator (*Yesod, Shin, Resh*). Hatha Yoga, esp. *asana* and *pranayama*. Passage of the King's Chamber (*Liber HHH*). Illumination of the Sphere (*Liber HHH*).

Practicus (*Hod, Qoph, Tsade, Pe*). Qabalah. *Jnana* Yoga. Control of Speech. Divining of Destiny (divination). Expansion of consciousness. Destruction of the House of God (destruction of thoughts). *Kundalini* Yoga (*Liber HHH*, Cap. SSS). Adoration under the Starry Heaven (*Liber NU*).

Philosophus (*Netzach, Ayin, Samekh, Nun*). Bhakti Yoga. Talismanic Magick. Evocation. Control of Action. Scrying (Journeying) in the Spirit Vision. Rising on the Planes. Meditations on the senses and the

⁴⁹ Strangely, according to *Liber O* and elsewhere, *asana*, *pranayama*, and *dharana* are prerequisites for these practices, even though they pertain to the higher grade of Zelator, q.v. This is a peculiarity of the A∴A∴ classification based on the Tree of Life.

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sheaths of the self (Sabhpathi Swami). *Mahasatipatthana* ('mindfulness'). Sabbath of the Adepts (*Liber CCCLXX*). Preparation of the Corpse for the Tomb (*Liber XXV*).

Dominus Liminis (*Paroketh*). Control of Thought. *Raja Yoga*, esp. *pratyahara* and *dharana*.

The Inner Order

Adeptus Minor (*Tiferet, Mem, Lamedh*). Invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel.

Adeptus Major (*Gevurah, Kaph, Yodh, Teth*). Magical practice, probably including sexual yoga.

Adeptus Exemptus (*Chesed, Heth, Zayin*). Publication of a thesis. Emancipation from thought by the mutual annihilation of opposites (*jnana yoga*).

Babe of the Abyss (*Da'at*). Self-annihilation or egocide.

The Supreme Order

Magister Templi (*Binah, Waw, He, Dalet*). *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*.

Magus (*Chokhmah, Gimel, Bet, Aleph*). Self-identification with the Aeon. Realization of non-duality.

Ipsissimus (*Keter*). Destruction of the karmic or volitional formations (*samskaras*). Buddhahood.

What Crowley is doing here is mapping his personal spiritual path onto the Tree of Life including the grade structure of the Rosicrucian order, which in its essential form expresses a search for the meaning of the perennial philosophy, once the philosophy is stripped away from the personal characteristics of the man. This is why Crowley says that his system is only one of many possible systems. Thus, the model presented by the A∴A∴ is, like the dharma, decentralized, non-sectarian, and non-authoritarian in principle. As the Buddha said in the

Mahaparinibbana Sutta, “each for himself.” Crowley specifically repudiated the toxicity of religion in his discussion of the Three Schools of Magick, which he identifies with the Black Brotherhood.

However, the A∴A∴ does present a serious model. In many respects it resembles the symbolic and hierarchical, decentralized, multi-monastic system of Tibetan Buddhist spiritual pluralism. Interestingly, Crowley’s last important disciple, Gerald Yorke (1901–1983), was also the Personal Representative to the West and English publisher of the 13th Dalai Lama – only one degree of separation from Crowley himself.

Initiation Rituals of the A∴A∴

Liber Graduum Montis Abiegni includes references to four rituals of initiation: Ritual XXVIII, to the grade of Probationer; DCLXXI, to the grade of Neophyte; CXX, to the grade of Zelator; and Ritual VIII, to the grade of Adeptus Minor, all along the Middle Pillar of the Tree of Life. These are entitled as follows:

XXVIII – *Liber Septem Regum Sanctorum* (‘The Ceremony of the Seven Holy Kings’)

DCLXXI – *Liber Pyramidos* (earlier version: *Liber Throa*)

CXX – *Liber Cadaveris: Of Passing through the Tuat*

VIII – “The Cry of the 8th Aethyr, Which is Called ZID”

Ritual XXVIII

The Ceremony of the Seven Holy Kings appears to be a punitive ritual intended as a corrective for recalcitrant probationers. Ideally, it requires nine officers. The candidate declares that he seeks the aid of Osiris, and is led blindfolded to a series of seven thrones, representing the planets in their sefirotic order: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Luna. At each throne the candidate receives a blessing corresponding

to the character of the planet, followed by seven hours in a “dark refuge,” with the revelation, “Osiris is a black god,” unless or until the candidate objects that he seeks Osiris, not blessings, at which point he is enthroned with the same revelation that “Osiris is a black god.”⁵⁰

Ritual DCLXXI

Ritual DCLXXI refers to *Liber Throa* and *Liber Pyramidos*. *Liber Throa* is described in Crowley’s diary, “John St. John,” and is based on the Neophyte ritual of the Golden Dawn.

The first operation of Ritual DCLXXI is the preparation of the Place. There are two forces; that of Death and that of Natural Life. Death begins the Operation by a knock, to which Life answers.

Then Death, banishing all forces external to the operation, declares the Speech in the Silence.

Both officers go from their thrones and form the base of a triangle whose apex is the East. They invoke the Divine Word, and then Death slays with the knife, and embalms with the oil, his sister Life.

Life, thus prepared, invokes, at the summons of Death, the forces necessary to the Operation.

The Word takes its station in the East and the officers salute it both by speech and silence in their signs; and they pronounce the secret Word of power that riseth from the Silence and returneth thereunto.

⁵⁰ In the ancient Egyptian religion Osiris was commonly depicted as a pharaoh with a black (or green) complexion, symbolizing the fertile mud of the Nile floodplain. This phrase was revealed to the candidate at the conclusion of the Eleusinian mysteries, as well as to high initiates in the original order of the Golden Dawn, representing the ultimate and final mystery of regeneration. Light only comes through darkness. Cf. the Black Sun (or Black Star).

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All this they affirm; and in affirming the triangular base of the Pyramid, find that they have mysteriously affirmed the Apex thereof whose name is Ecstasy. This also is sealed by that secret Word; for that Word containeth All.

Into this prepared Pyramid of divine Light there cometh a certain darkling wight, who knoweth not either his own nature, or his origin or destiny, or even the name of that which he desireth.

Before he can enter the Pyramid, therefore, four ordeals are required of him.

So, bound and blinded, he stumbles forward, and passes through the wrath of the Four Great Princes of the Evil of the World, whose Terror is about him on every side. Yet since he has followed the voice of the Officer who has prepared him, in this part of the Ritual no longer merely Nature, but the great Mother, but Neschamah (his aspiration) and the representative of Adonai, he may pass through all. Yea, in spite of the menace of the Hieres, ⁵¹ whose function is now that of his fear and of his courage, he goes on and enters the Pyramid. But there he is seized and thrown down by both officers as one unworthy to enter. His aspiration purifies him with steel and fire; and there as he lies shattered by the force of the ritual, he hears – even as a corpse that hears the voice of Israfil ⁵² – the Hegemon ⁵³

⁵¹ Gk. 'priest,' one of the three chief initiatory officers in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. He is stationed in the West of the temple, carries the Banner of the West and the Sword of Judgment, wears a black cloak and a black and white nemyss, and assumes the Egyptian god form of Horus the Avenger. S.T.

⁵² Israfil, the Muslim angel who blows into the trumpet to signal the Day of Judgment and the Day of Resurrection. In the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn he was identified with Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom, writing, and magic, prominent in the hermetic literature. S.T.

⁵³ Gk. 'guide,' one of the three chief initiatory officers in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. He guides the candidate on the path of darkness that leads to the light. He is a force of balance and reconciliation. He carries a mitre-headed sceptre, wears a white cloak and nemyss, and assumes the god form of the Egyptian goddess Ma'at. S.T.

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that chants a solemn hymn of praise to that glory which is at the Apex, and who invisibly rules and governs the whole Pyramid.

Now then that darkling wight is lifted by the officers and brought to the altar in the centre; and there the Hiereus accuses him of the two and twenty Basenesses, while the Hegemom lifting up his chained arms cries again and again against his enemy that he is under the Shadow of the Eternal Wings of the Holy One. Yet at the end, at the supreme accusation, the Hiereus smites him into death. The same answer avails him, and in its strength he is uplifted by his aspiration – now he stands upright.

Now then he makes a journey in his new house, and perceives at stated times, each time proceeded by a new ordeal and equilibration, the forces that surround him. Death he sees, and the Life of Nature whose name is Sorrow, and the Word that quickeneth these, and his own self – and when he hath recognised these four in their true nature he passes to the altar once more and as the apex of the descending triangle is admitted to the lordship of the Double Kingdom. Thus is he a member of the visible triad that is crossed with the invisible – behold the hexagram of Solomon the King! All this the Hiereus seals with a knock and at the Hegemom's new summons he – to his surprise – finds himself as the Hanged Man of the Tarot.

Each point of the figure thus formed they crown with light, until he glitters with the Flame of the Spirit. Thus and not otherwise is he made a partaker of the Mysteries, and the Lightning Flash strikes him. The Lord hath descended from heaven with a shout and with the Voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God.

He is installed in the Throne of the Double Kingdom, and he wields the Wand of Double Power by the signs of the grade. He is recognised an initiate, and the word of Secret Power, and the silent administration of the Sacrament of Sword and Flame, acknowledge him.

Then, the words being duly spoken and the deeds duly done, all is symbolically sealed by the Thirty Voices, and the Word that vibrateth from the Silence of the Speech, and from the Speech again unto the Silence.

Then the Pyramid is sealed up, even as it was opened; yet in the sealing thereof the three men partake in a certain mystical manner of the Eucharist of the Four Elements that are consumed for the Perfection of the Oil.

Ritual CXX

The translation of this ritual is “the Book of the Corpse.” The subtitle refers to passing through the Tuat, referring to the Duat, the realm of the dead in ancient Egyptian mythology, and the place where people’s souls went for judgment, represented, interestingly, as a star in a circle. The ritual opens with an adoration of the Egyptian god Horus, followed by a dance or circumambulation, a song or mantra and prostration, and the administration of a Eucharist. The candidate is stripped, wrapped like a mummy, and placed in a coffin, whence he is carried into a darkened temple, and progressively unwrapped and raised, as though from the dead. He is then marked on the forehead, heart, and head with the Mark of the Beast. The lights are turned on, and he is led from the temple to a boat, which is then brought into the temple. The candidate is removed from the boat and enthroned. Apparently, this ritual was used in the initiation of the Order of Thelemites.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Crowley authorized one James Thomas Windram, who Crowley apparently recognized as a Major Adept of the A∴A∴ with the motto *Frater Semper Peratum*, to organize the Order of Thelemites about 1920. According to Richard Kaczynski, Windram joined the A∴A∴ on August 11, 1910. He served as Crowley’s viceroy in South Africa for many years, dying in 1939. He is credited by Kaczynski with conjuring up a storm that tore the roof off his house and struck his temple with lightning using Enochian magic (Jack Parsons, the one-time head of the O.T.O. in California, is also reputed to have conjured up a storm). The South African winery called “Thelema” is probably descended from Windram. There is no indication that the Order of Thelemites has survived.

Ritual VIII

Ritual VIII was received by Crowley as a part of *The Vision of the Voice* in the Sahara desert on December 8, 1909, between Bou-Saada and Biskra. It is an updated version of the Sacred Magick of Abramelin the Mage, by which the Holy Guardian Angel is invoked, and consists of a magical retirement of 91 days, characterized by repetitive and intense aspiration, three or seven hours per day (seven hours per day during the final week, or 49 hours), in a specially prepared chamber or temple, at the end of which the Angel is supposed to manifest as a bright light. This ritual is oddly suggestive of a similar retirement practice described in the Lotus Sutra for invoking the Buddha in his egregore⁵⁵ of Samantabhadra, the Adi or Primordial Buddha.⁵⁶

The Structure of the A∴A∴

I have mentioned before the similarity of the spiritual structure of the A∴A∴ to the Buddhist sangha. Like the sangha, members of the A∴A∴ work in pairs, based on a system of preceptorship, where a senior member trains a junior member in the work and tasks of their grade. There is little or no emphasis on group working, although in fact members of the early A∴A∴ did fraternize and perform magical work together, especially at the Abbey of Thelema. However, whereas the Buddhist sangha survives on almsgiving, the A∴A∴ model is more eremitic and esoteric. *The Book of the Law* praises “the Hermit” (lit. ‘person of the desert’) as the highest grade. Both Crowley and Tibetan Buddhists engage in “magical retirements” where much of their spiritual work is done.

⁵⁵ A psychic manifestation, group thought form, or meme (cf. Tib. *tulpa*).

⁵⁶ See the *Samantabhadra Meditation Sutra*, traditionally appended to the Lotus Sutra.

What Happened to the A∴A∴?

Crowley remained the Visible Head of the A∴A∴ until his death, after which the role of Visible Head of the Order fell to Karl Germer (1885–1962). Germer had been incarcerated by the Nazis in 1935 and placed in solitary confinement, and again in 1940. Germer was released in 1941 and joined his American wife. It was during his period in solitary confinement that Germer, like Sri Aurobindo, who also endured solitary confinement, this time under the British Indian dictatorship, experienced the “ordeal of the abyss” that led to his attainment of the grade of Master of the Temple of the A∴A∴, subsequently recognized by Crowley in 1938. After Crowley’s death in 1947, Germer therefore became the Visible Head of the A∴A∴ and the Outer Head of the O.T.O.

However, Germer was dissatisfied with the O.T.O. and dissolved its only American chapter, the so-called Agape Lodge, which Crowley too panned, nor did he actively pursue the work of the A∴A∴ in the outer, preferring instead to pursue a program of publishing. Germer himself died in 1962, without appointing a successor in either the A∴A∴ or the O.T.O. In the case of the O.T.O., he directed that the remaining continental chiefs of the order select a new O.H.O., but this meeting was never held. With respect to the A∴A∴, a number of scattered A∴A∴ lineages may have survived in a very limited way, based on the limited authority of several low grade members, including Frank Bennett, Jane Wolfe, Charles Stansfeld Jones, Israel Regardie, Phyllis Seckler, Grady Louis McMurtry, Marcelo Ramos Motta, and perhaps Gerald Yorke (though Jones, Regardie, and Yorke clearly rejected the Law of Thelema), but it is quite clear from the history and constitution of the A∴A∴ that the Visible Head of the Order must be an Exempt Adept at least (as was Mathers), and must demonstrate a magical link with the Secret Chiefs of the Order, to assume the role of Premonstrator.

Crowley's own authority vis-à-vis the A∴A∴ was based on (1) his recognition, before Crowley's disillusionment, by Mathers, on the basis of which he established the L.I.L. in Mexico; (2) the Cairo Working and his reception of the *Book of the Law*; and (3) mutual recognition by Crowley and one George Cecil Jones (1873–1960) as Masters of the Temple in 1907. To date no one has appeared publicly who is able to reconstitute the A∴A∴ in the Outer based on such criteria. However, the A∴A∴ in the Inner is eternal and may reestablish itself in the Outer at any time, provided the proper conditions are met. Crowley made it clear that the initiatic system of the A∴A∴ is original, only one of many possible systems, and that one can attain high spiritual grades in the A∴A∴ in the Inner without necessarily having graduated from his specific program of study. In particular, Crowley says that anyone may claim the grade of Master of the Temple.⁵⁷ On this basis, Crowley recognized William Blake and H.P. Blavatsky as Masters of the Temple of the A∴A∴.

During his life, Crowley recognized Martha Kuntzel (1857–1942) and Otto Gebhardi as Masters of the Temple of the A∴A∴, although he subsequently expelled Kuntzel from the Order due to her Nazi sympathies. Crowley made it very clear that attainment of the grades of the A∴A∴ is not equivalent to actual spiritual enlightenment, the latter being based on Spiritual Experience, any more than the attainment of a Ph.D. in a university or a high IQ automatically makes one a genius. One can even fall back from the grade of Master of the Temple into the Abyss. Infallibility is not implied.

⁵⁷ There is even an individual today who has claimed the grade of Ipsissimus, apparently based on nothing whatsoever except his voracious egotism, which I will not satisfy by naming him.

IV

The Strange Story of Aleister Crowley and AIWAZ

1

The first time that the name of AIWAZ (or Aiwass, as Crowley spelled it) was heard by Aleister Crowley was in March 1904, when his wife, Rose Edith Crowley née Kelly, spontaneously entered a state of trance. It is often forgotten that it was not Aleister Crowley who sought out the Cairo Working. It was an unknown intelligence communicating through the spontaneous mediumship of Rose that called Crowley to fulfil the role of the Beast 666, with which he had identified himself both in his childhood imaginings and in his poetry. It was Rose who told Crowley that the source of the cryptic messages concerning the Child, Osiris, Horus, the Equinox of the Gods, Christian Rosy [sic] Cross, and the Solar Force was one AIWAZ. Years later, Crowley would state that he had never heard this name before. This is probably true. AIWAZ (Aiwass is a significant misspelling) is very rare. One search showed that only 193 individuals have this surname, mostly in Pakistan, especially Balochistan. There are numerous variations (e.g., Awas, Abaz, Avaz, etc.). It is the 1,214,709th most popular surname in the world, though today, with the advent of social media, it is easier to find a few AIWAZs on Facebook.

Rose instructed Crowley to sit at his writing desk at 12 noon on Friday, April 8, 1904⁵⁸ and the next two days and to write down what he heard. He obeyed, armed with paper and a Swan fountain pen, and at 12 noon precisely he heard a voice and had a vivid impression of a ghost-like figure behind his left shoulder. Crowley described the voice as passionate, deep, musical, expressive, tenor or baritone. Crowley found the voice “startling and uncanny” because it was completely devoid of any accent, and therefore inhuman sounding. Crowley felt the voice as an odd vibration in his heart.

The ghost-like figure was tall, dark, a little older than Crowley himself (Crowley was all of 28), personable, athletic, aristocratic, and Persian-Assyrian in appearance, “with a face like a savage king” (this was a psychic impression; at no time did Crowley turn and look at the figure). In Crowley’s vision the figure wore a veil or mask across his eyes.

AIWAZ is identified as the speaker in the seventh verse of the first chapter of the *Book of the Law*, as the subsequent dictation came to be called: “Behold! it is revealed by Aiwass the minister of Hoor-paar-kraat.” AIWAZ refers to himself in the third person. Whereas the physical voice of the *Book of the Law* is that of AIWAZ, he himself is the medium of the three ultimate cosmic beings: Nuit, the Egyptian goddess of the sky; Hadit, the winged solar disk; and Horus, the avenging son of Isis and Osiris. AIWAZ says only that he is the “minister.” A minister is both a minor priest (or a priest’s servant) and a high officer of the Crown (or the state). Originally, “to minister” is to serve

⁵⁸ Interestingly, April 8 is the birthday of the Buddha according to the Japanese tradition and is probably closer to his actual birthday than the tradition that he was born in mid-May. 1904 is the year in which the British invaded Tibet, the home of Vajrayana Buddhism. The British assaulted Red Idol Gorge on April 9, 1904, on the original second feast day of AL, en route to Gyantse, which they reached on April 11. Days of wrath indeed.

food or drink.⁵⁹ AIWAZ' superior is Hoor-paar-kraat (Eg. Harpa-khered, Heru-pa-khered; Gk. Harpokrates, lit. "Horus the Child"). Harpokrates, the god of silence, is represented as a small boy with his finger pressed to his lips. In fact, the voice of AIWAZ himself is never heard in the *Book of the Law*. He is perfectly inscrutable. He channels the divine, but in himself he is perfectly silent.

At first Crowley interpreted the Cairo Working, as he called it, as an astral vision and the *Book of the Law* an automatic writing. Crowley, who intensely disliked spiritualism, was embarrassed by the *Book of the Law* and distanced himself from it, but, clearly, it also fascinated him. He doodled on the cover page of the Book. There is a large stain on the first page of the third chapter. He took the Cairo Working seriously enough, however, to inform S.L. Mathers, the Chief of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, that a New Aeon had been proclaimed with Crowley to supplant Mathers as the Head of the Order. Mathers's reply, if he wrote one, is not preserved as far as I know. After some preliminary Qabalistic analyses, Crowley ruminated on whether to include the Book in his *Collected Works*, then promptly lost the manuscript.

Crowley carried on with his spiritual work without any further reference to the *Book of the Law*. By this time he was no longer merely a magician; he was a mystic, seeking personal communion with his own Godhood. He invoked his Holy Guardian Angel. He crossed the "Abyss" and attained the grade of Magister Templi (Master of the Temple) of the A∴A∴ or Silver Star. He founded the Order of the A∴A∴ without reference to the Cairo Working or the *Book of the Law*, based rather on his experiences in the Hermetic Order of the Golden

⁵⁹ Cf. Jap. *yorishiro*, 'approach substitute,' in which case AIWAZ is a *kami* and the *Book of the Law* – the stele of Ankh-ef-en-khonsu being a *shintai* – is a *yorishiro*. Crowley is therefore a *yorimashi* or *kamigakari*. See also the etymological meaning of AIWAZ.

Dawn, Yoga, Buddhism, and metaphysical philosophy that he synthesized in his philosophies of “Crowleyanity” and Scientific Illuminism towards the end of 1907. On this system, Crowley subsequently superimposed the memorization of the Holy Books (the *Book of the Law* itself was memorized in part in the grade of Zelator). The only specifically “thelemic” task of the Great White Brotherhood is *Liber V vel Reguli: The Ritual of the Mark of the Beast*, in the grade of Philosophus. “Sex magick” (sexual yoga) is also Thelemic, of course, though not exclusively so. One also finds it in the Kalachakra and elsewhere. This was later grafted onto the original system in *Magick in Theory and Practice*, especially the grades of Zelator, Philosophus, and Adeptus Within in connection with the formula of the Rosy Cross in the College of the Holy Ghost and Devotion to the Order. Thus, the final system of the A∴A∴ includes both the Law of Thelema and the Supreme Secret of the O.T.O., without being subordinate to either. The central tasks of the Great White Brotherhood are simply the underlying universals of the Great Work attributed to the Qabalistic Tree of Life.

The story of Crowley’s conversion to his own religion of Thelema – or, rather, the religion that had been revealed to him as the apotheosis of his own work – would take us too far afield to repeat here. Suffice to say that Crowley came to realize the significance of the Cairo Working only after he crossed the Abyss, and rededicated his life to the promulgation of the Law of Thelema in June 1909, more than five years after the original event.

In the course of his subsequent career Crowley explained the identity of AIWAZ in different ways, not necessarily mutually exclusive. Crowley identified Hoor-paar-kraat, the silent child-god of the sun, with the True Self, which would make AIWAZ the “minor” of the True Self, the Holy Guardian Angel, interior

Genius, or “daimon.”⁶⁰ Whereas the True Self is the being of the self and therefore utterly unknowable, the Genius is the True Will, ultimately one with the True Self, the dynamic/kinetic “going” in its ultimate and most essential aspect, the realization of which confers the essential empowerment of the grade of Major Adept of the Inner College of the Great White Brotherhood. In the biographical note to *The Book of Thoth* Crowley states that he attained this grade in April 1904. More generally, Crowley identified AIWAZ with the libido, more in the Jungian sense of “psychic energy” than in the Freudian, narrowly sexual sense. Although Crowley certainly regarded AIWAZ as both a magical formula and an individual, at no time did Crowley consider that AIWAZ might be the proper name of a man. Crowley thought the word was an artificial Qabalistic construction like ABRAHADABRA or BABALON.

2

In 1918, Crowley was working in New York City as the editor of a popular magazine, *The International*, owned by German businessman George Sylvester Viereck, himself a well-known man of letters. At the same time, he was performing a series of magical rites with his “scarlet woman,” Roddie Minor. These operations consisted of interviews with a preterhuman

⁶⁰ In the Ab-ul-Diz Working Crowley was informed that he was the “demon” of the aeon, and his age the number of Chaos or ATh, spelt in full (1400). More, properly, ATh is a contracted form of AVTh ‘sign,’ indicative of the accusative tense. Crowley glosses this word as “the” or “Essence” (401), “the sum and essence of all, conceived as One.” See *Sepher Sephiroth, Liber LVIII*, and John Symonds, *The Great Beast: The Life and Magick of Aleister Crowley* (Frogmore, UK: Mayflower, 1973), pp. 157, 171. Contrary to Symonds’s rather negative interpretation, the connotation of the word “demon” (daemon or daimon) is not necessarily pejorative. Ab-ul-Diz also identifies Perdurabo with the number 65, Adonai or the “Holy Guardian Angel,” “the most spiritual form of force.”

intelligence that called itself Amalantrah,⁶¹ through the mediumship of Roddie. These deeply obscure interviews seemed to continue themes and symbols that had at first appeared during a previous series of operations, conducted eight years before, with a different woman, Mary d'Este Sturges, the secretary of noted dancer Isadora Duncan, in a rented villa in Italy. These efforts to contact preterhuman intelligences were doubtless influenced by the Cairo Working. The working with Mary with an entity that called itself Ab-ul-Diz resulted in the writing of *Book Four*, Crowley's celebrated classic in four parts on Meditation (Yoga), Magic, and the Cairo Working. Book Four, Part III – *Magick in Theory and Practice* – is widely regarded as Crowley's magnum opus, and has been described as a postmodernist classic.

⁶¹ The nature of this being is curious. In her first vision, Roddie describes a candlestick that breaks off at the stem, becoming a crown: "The crown floated in the air, tilted at a slight angle; and a circle, which was a halo, came down from heaven and dropped into the crown. In the center a wand came, and then it all hovered above the candlestick with a veil round it. The veil in some ways appeared as rays of light." Many years later noted astronomer, computer scientist, and UFOlogist Jacques Vallée theorized that descriptions like this constitute the historical basis of the UFO phenomenon in his book, *Passport to Magonia* (cf. C.G. Jung, *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies*). Roddie's vision was obtained with the assistance of opium. UFO experiences are also reported by people who take ayahuasca and other psychedelics. Vallée does not, however, believe that UFOs are extraterrestrial. Another interesting comparison with UFOs, also noted by Vallée, is that Amalantrah/UFOs often communicate using symbolic allusions, often obscure and complex, rather than "words," such as one might expect from an "alien" or "praeterhuman" intelligence that does not necessarily communicate in English or even in language as we understand it. The symbolic level of consciousness or sentience is prelinguistic; perhaps it is ontologically primordial (see Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*).

During the evening of Sunday, February 24 at 9:30 p.m.⁶² Crowley was trying to get the Hebrew spelling of the Greek ΘΗΠΙΟΝ. Crowley wanted a phonetic equivalent transliteration that added up to 666. The answer that Amalantrah gave was wrong, but seemed to imply or allude to a simpler answer that eluded Crowley. Crowley claims that he could not find a suitable transliteration, even though the solution is only two steps removed from a direct literal rendering of the Greek letters. What is even more surprising is that on the following Tuesday Crowley found a letter at his office from a reader of *The International*. The letter was not addressed to Crowley himself, but to Viereck, the owner of *The International*, who had put the letter, received on Monday, on Crowley's desk for reply. The letter, which survives in the Warburg collection in London, was essentially a fan letter and the writer a fan of the magazine and a reader of Crowley's. He had read Crowley's article in which he had stated that the Hebrew spelling of ΘΗΠΙΟΝ was unknown. The writer had tried his hand at the puzzle and, not surprisingly, had found the solution in the letters ThRYVN. Crowley was already intrigued when he read the Americanized signature of the writer: Samuel AIWAZ Jacobs (Shmuel [Samuel] bar AIWAZ ['son of AIWAZ'] bie Yackou de Sherabad). Then he noticed the date of the letter. It was February 24, 1918, the exact date of the interview with Amalantrah in which he had tried to obtain the Hebrew spelling.

Crowley wrote to Mr. Jacobs and asked him for the Hebrew spelling of AIWAZ. Jacob's reply, OYVZ, struck him to the core. The letters added up to 93, the number of Thelema, the key number of the *Book of the Law*.

⁶² In his *Confessions* Crowley says that this was a Saturday. Elsewhere he says that this incident occurred in January. However, the correct date and time are given in *Magick in Theory and Practice* (1929; rpt. New York: Castle Books, n.d.), p. 258.

The exact extent of Crowley's subsequent communication with Samuel AIWAZ Jacobs is unclear. Jacobs, an expert in metaphysical verse, had clearly read Crowley with deep attention. In 1918 America, it was surely unusual in the extreme, if not unknown, for anyone to write positively about the Antichrist. In fact, after Crowley left New York City, his book, *The Blue Equinox*, created a scandal in which Crowley's publisher was accused of being a Satanist. Jacobs subsequently corresponded with Charles Stansfeld Jones, Crowley's American representative, in August 1918, but there is no evidence he joined either the O.T.O. or the A.:A.:. At some point Jacobs shared with Crowley Jacobs's theory that AIWAZ was the proper name of the god of the Yazidis (in a 1929 interview Jacobs identified the name "AIWAZ" with Satan).⁶³ Based on the scholarship of the time, it was believed that the Yazidis, a Kurdish people located in northern Iraq, worshipped a primitive form of Satan. This became the basis of Crowley's subsequent identification of AIWAZ with Satan in *Magick in Theory and Practice*, especially in "Liber Samekh" in the Appendix, which in turn he identified with the Egyptian god Set, the enemy of Horus (the conflict between Horus and Set is, mystically interpreted, two sides of the same coin).⁶⁴ Jacobs and Crowley believed that Yazidism combines traditional Sumerian beliefs with Islamic Sufi heresies (an unpopular theory today). According to Yazidi belief, Melek Taus, the Peacock Angel, is the chief of seven Angels that are set over the world by God. His other name is Shaitan or Shaytan. The Yazidi belief system is reminiscent of the Gnostic Nag Hammadi scriptures. Like the Gnostic Sethians, the Yazidis regard the disobedience of Satan as an enlightened act. The Yazidis follow the Qur'an, which states that Satan was cast down by God for refusing to submit to man.

⁶³ Jacobs also identified Nu with ANU, the divine personification of the sky, and Hadit with HADAD, the god of storms and rain, in the Sumerian pantheon.

⁶⁴ Accusing Crowley of being a "satanist" on this basis is of course as absurd as accusing the Yazidis of the same.

Like some Sufis, the Yazidis believe that God's command was a test, and only Iblis understood this. In fact, God was testing the angel's love of him. Iblis was willing to disobey God and endure hell itself rather than give up his love of God and submission to the Highest. Thus, Iblis is the true Muslim.

For his part, Crowley referred to Jacobs as a "Brother." This has been taken to mean that Crowley recognized Jacobs as a Brother of the Great White Brotherhood, i.e., a Secret Chief, in which case Crowley's statement in *The Equinox of the Gods* that he has seen AIWAZ and other Secret Chiefs in person may refer to Jacobs, although there is no evidence that the two ever actually met. Jacobs may also have been a fellow Freemason. Crowley came to identify AIWAZ as an Ipsissimus of the Great White Brotherhood, and the Secret Chief that is responsible for the initiation of the Earth during the current cycle of the New Aeon.⁶⁵

3

Samuel AIWAZ Jacobs (1890/91–1971), Persian-Assyrian by birth, was an American printer, typographer, compiler, and poet who founded the Golden Eagle Press in the 1920s in Mount Vernon, New York. Jacobs became the typesetter and press agent of e e cummings (it was Jacobs who introduced the lower-case display of cummings's name), and also designed books for Covici Friede, New Directions, Oxford University Press, and Dutton. He designed two original Syriac fonts and was an authority on metaphysical verse. He produced many books for his own and other presses, including a fine edition of Chaucer. Jacobs was clearly influenced by libertarian notions similar to those of Aleister Crowley, as shown in the following quotation:

To those of you who will begin, as I did, at an early age to be interested in creative effort, I have a word or two to say: Follow no

⁶⁵ Identified by Karl Germer with the Beast 666.

one. Only you can lead yourself. Be open-minded and ready to reject every extraneous influence. Use your own. Talk is cheap; let others talk. Pay no attention to them or to me. Shun them and me with your self-discipline. Value your freedom from the shackles of the strait jacket. A rose is a rose regardless of its position on the bush. Approach your line of activity as an individual. Be independent. There is but one law to obey, the law of freedom: and obedience to that law is liberty.

Although Jacobs outlived Crowley by 24 years, it is not known if anyone ever asked him about Aleister Crowley. In 1904, he was about 14 years old.⁶⁶

Jacobs is remembered today as an early pioneer of the research into a universal script. Jacobs's fascination with alphabets eerily echoes AIWAZ' references to the mysteries of the letters and the words in the *Book of the Law*. According to Eden Naby, "Jacobs, living absorbed in letters from his youth..., may have had a strong interest in '*ilm al-horuf*,'⁶⁷ that is, the science of interpreting letters and their numerical values, whether or not he also studied the practice, derived from it, of magic 'based on the occult properties of the letters of the alphabet and of the divine and angelic names which they form.'"⁶⁸ His papers are catalogued in the Philip Kaplan Collection of S.A. Jacobs (1950–1958) at the Southern Illinois University Special Collections Research Centre. His papers also reveal an interest in acoustics and in Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, so perhaps he was not as savage as the *Book of the Law* seems to imply.

⁶⁶ John Symonds unaccountably ignores the entire Jacobs episode in his biography of Crowley. Since Jacobs was still alive when *The Great Beast* was first published in 1952, Symonds missed an exceptional opportunity to interview Jacobs on his relations with Crowley, additional details of which we will probably never know.

⁶⁷ Or '*ilm al-huruf*'. S.T.

⁶⁸ Jacobs, Samuel AIWAZ.

Note on the Name “Aivaz” (Eir)⁶⁹

The Turkish word that is written in the Latin alphabet of modern Turkish as *ayvaz* occurs widely as a given name, a surname (or a component of one), and a component of place names. Most of the variant forms are (or were formerly) written with the Arabic letter *ḍād*; and Turkish dictionaries derive the word from one and the same Arabic common noun. Exceptions, including a form in Arabic script that agrees with S. A. Jacobs’ Neo-Aramaic spelling in using letter *zāy*, are noted below (in [3]). The three Turkish forms whose spellings incorporate ‘ – w – ḍ’ of the Arabic root are as follows.

(1) Turkish /*ivaz*/. The Ottoman words written ‘*ivāz* and plural a‘*vāz* (Redhouse, p. 1328) exactly reproduce the spellings and meaning of Arabic ‘*iwaḍ* (عوض), pl. a‘*wāḍ* (اعواض), basically “substitute” (Lane, p. 2197)⁷⁰ and extending to “something in exchange or as compensation” (Barthélemy, II, p. 562; Kieffer and Bianchi, II, p. 296; for its use as a technical term in Islamic law, see Linant de Bellefonds). The corresponding name is attested historically—e.g., the soldier Hacı İvaz Paşa (پاشا عوض حاجی, d. 1429; Özcan); a 17th-century Safavid governor, ‘İvaz Beg (Matthee, p. 61); and a Turkmen İvaz Beg, father of the khan of Khiva, İltüzər (r. 1804–06; Saray). The name is also familiar in Turkish literature. Hacı İvaz (= Hacıvat; perhaps inspired by the historical Hacı İvaz) is a protagonist, with Karagöz, in the Turkish shadow puppet plays (see, e.g., Arvas). Not surprisingly, İvaz also occurs in place of Ayvaz (see [2], below) in the Köroğlu epic, which is found across the entire range of Turkish dialects: P. Naili (p. 40) distinguished three main lines of the literary tradition: Anatolian, Azeri (in Azerbaijan), and Turkmen (in Khorasan).

(2) Turkish /*ayvaz*/. The Ottoman Turkish term *ayvaz* (عوض) was a title applied to non-Muslim (also to Kurdish) household servants and functionaries (Lewis, based on Siyavuşgil). Š. Aksoy (p. 60) found a dialect version of the term noted in (1), above, as /*ayvaz*/ in southern Turkey bordering Syria. As a name, the word also is seen latinized as

⁶⁹ Eden Naby, “JACOBS, SAMUEL AIWAZ.” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, 2016.
<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jacobs-samuel>.

⁷⁰ Interestingly, Aiwaz is also a Hindi word for ‘substitute.’ S.T.

Eyvaz, Eywaz, Eyvez. A well-known example in Turkish literature is the handsome youth Ayvaz, companion of the bandit poet Koroğlu (see, e.g., Sand, tr., p. 9 and ff.). “One of the most common motifs of the Koroğlu epic is the story of Ayvaz (İvaz Han, İvaz)” (Naili, p. 44). In other occurrences, a Persian family name ‘Eyvaż-zāda (ع یواض زاده) is commonly anglicized as Eyvazzadeh; the Armenian family name is Aivazian (see, e.g., in the Ottoman period, Wharton, p. 91). Kurdish Eyvaz in Cyrillic is: Эйваз. Place names include present-day Ayvazlar in northwest Turkey and ‘Eyvażlu (ع یواضلو), north of Ardabil, in Iran.

(3) Turkish /ayvāz/. A dictionary form of the noun marks initial a- explicitly, with the diacritic fatḥa (ع یواض; Sāmi, p. 958). In Arabic script, the Azeri name ‘Eyvāż (e.g., the contemporary Republic of Azerbaijan poet, Yetim Eyvaz) likewise is written in literary form as ع یواض, as well as in phonemic form, ‘yw’z (ایواز, for which see also the Koroğlu character in Alizade, ed., pp. 41 ff.). A. Barthelemy (p. 562) cites an Arabic version of the abovementioned literary character Hacı İvaz in a dialect form /ēwāz/, here spelled with letter zā (‘ywz, ع یواظ). For the lengthening of -a- in the name, EIr suggests possible analogical influence of names such as (in Turkish) ‘İyāz and İyās.

V

Unlocking the Comment

The Paradox of the Comment

The Comment is the last official publication of the A∴A∴ in Class A – “holy book,” so-called – written in Tunis in 1925, fourteen years after the previous holy books were written, and less than five years after Aleister Crowley wrote his commentary on the *Book of the Law*, in response to the promise of that Book: “But the work of the comment? That is easy; and Hadit burning in thy heart shall make swift and secure thy pen.”⁷¹ After twenty-one years of study and discussion, the Comment, as anyone who troubles to read it will see, forbids the *study* and *discussion* of the *Book of the Law*, advising the reader to “destroy this copy after the first reading,” and referring him to the writings of Aleister Crowley, by appeal to which only “[a]ll questions of the Law are be decided ... each for himself.” Anyone who violates this prohibition is anathema. One is reminded of the Aga Khan, whose followers ascribe to him alone the right to read and interpret the Qur’an, whose authority they then follow. This is merely the logical conclusion of the original (and quite valid) position taken by the Roman Church toward the Bible. In view

⁷¹ Op. cit., III, 40. There are three references in *Liber CCXX* to the Comment: I, 36; III, 39f. The sum of the digits of these verses (3 + 6 + 3 + 9 + 4) equals 25, the common year in which the Comment was finally written.

of these historical precedents, Colin Wilson's incredulity is less than convincing.⁷²

Nonetheless, there are other problems associated with the Comment, not least of which is Crowley's own failure to interpret the prohibition on studying the Book at all. In his comment on the Comment, Crowley seems to imply that only discussion is forbidden: "One High Court of Interpretation, each for himself alone." Crowley actually predicts the advent of a "genius ... who will accomplish all this work for us," i.e., the elucidation of "a secret interpretation, which, being hidden as it is hidden, is presumably of even graver importance than the text as it stands [which may] modify, or even reverse, the outer meaning" [sic].⁷³

Since we are required by the Comment to regard Crowley as the sole legitimate exponent of the *Book of the Law*, there is no escaping this paradox. According to Aleister Crowley, a genius will arise who will promulgate a superior exposition of the Book than Crowley's own, yet the Comment forbids the Book's study and discussion, and refers the reader back to Crowley's primary authority. *This is the paradox of the Comment.*⁷⁴

Crowley does not really seem to expect his followers to not study the Book, since the Minerval of the O.T.O. is sworn to do so (although that oath was written before the reception of the Comment), but Crowley adds that "[t]he value to you of the Book varies directly with the degree of your own initiation." Since the only value of the *Book of the Law* lies in its contents, which must be read and studied to be understood, this quotation

⁷² See his *Aleister Crowley: The Nature of the Beast* (Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press—Thorsons, 1987), p. 72.

⁷³ *Magick Without Tears*, pp. 27–30.

⁷⁴ One solution of this paradox might be that Crowley will be reborn as his own successor.

clearly implies the same.⁷⁵ The root of the Comment goes back as far as 1912 since, in his commentary on *Liber 333*, we read: “By ‘devotion to Frater Perdurabo’ is not meant sycophancy, but intelligent reference and imaginative sympathy. Put your mind in tune with his; identify yourself with him as he seeks to identify himself with the Intelligence that communicates to him the Holy Books.”⁷⁶ The implication, of course, is that it is inappropriate for us, who are “not so chosen,”⁷⁷ to devote ourselves directly to the Holy Books. This is reaffirmed in *The Equinox of the Gods*:

I lay claim to be the sole authority competent to decide disputed points with regard to the Book of the Law, seeing that its Author, AIWAZ, is none other than mine own Holy Guardian Angel, to Whose Knowledge and Conversation I have attained, so that I have exclusive access to Him. I have duly referred every difficulty to Him directly, and received His answer; my award is therefore absolute without appeal.⁷⁸

Yet AIWAZ Himself seems less certain. He says, “[c]hange not as much as the style of a letter; for behold! thou, o prophet, shalt not behold all these mysteries hidden therein.” In addition, in Chapter II, v. 76 (which number equals ChBYVN ‘hiding place’), he reiterates a similar message: “What meaneth this, o prophet? Thou knowest not; nor shalt thou know ever.” Again, “in the chance shape of the letters and their position to one another: in these are mysteries that no Beast shall divine. Let

⁷⁵ Ibid. See also p. 2: “you should have a copy of *The Equinox of the Gods* and make *The Book of the Law* your constant study.”

⁷⁶ Op. cit., p. 179.

⁷⁷ *Liber CCXX*, II, 17.

⁷⁸ Op. cit., p. 127. Cf. the following, from “Z-2,” an official paper of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn: “let the Adept remember that this process here set forth is on no account to be applied to endeavouring to come in contact with the higher soul of another. Else thus assuredly will he be led into error, hallucination, or even madness” (Israel Regardie, *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic*, Vol. VI [1984; rpt. Scottsdale, AZ: New Falcon Publications, 1990], p. 46).

him not seek to try.”⁷⁹ These verses seem clear enough; perhaps they are what led Crowley to prophesy the advent of the genius discussed above. In any case, they prove that “Ankh-ef-en-khonsu” must not be considered a perfect exponent of AIWAZ’ Message. Judging from the reiteration, rather the opposite. (These verses show that AIWAZ, whoever or whatever he may be, cannot simply be identified with Crowley’s ego.)

There are other problems associated with the Comment. Why are there no holy books after 1911, other than the Comment?⁸⁰ If the purpose of the Comment is to control the tendency to heresy, as Crowley implies, why is the prohibition on study and discussion peculiar to the *Book of the Law*, and not the remaining Holy Books or *Liber 418*, published in Class A-B (not to mention the “holy note” of *Liber CMLXIII*)? Is there some difference between them and it? Moreover, why is the prohibition on study and discussion not a violation of the Law of “Do what thou wilt,” which introduces and concludes the

⁷⁹ *Liber CCXX*, I, 54; III, 47. The Qabalistic significance of the number of each verse of *Liber CCXX* may be interpreted as a key to the theme of the verse. For this and subsequent interpretations, see especially *Liber LVIII*; *Liber D*; and “The Meaning of the Primes from 11 to 97” in *Liber 777* (published as *The Qabalah of Aleister Crowley/777 and Other Qabalistic Writings of Aleister Crowley* [1973; rpt. York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1983]), p. xxv.

⁸⁰ The Comment was never published under the Seal of the A∴A∴ in Class A because it was published as an addendum to the *Book of the Law*, which was already published in Class A, but this should not stop us from regarding the Comment as a Class A document for at least four reasons: (1) it was added to *Liber CCXX* by the Prophet, and the *Book of the Law* is Class A; (2) it was accepted by the Prophet as the Comment prophesied in *Liber CCXX*, I, 36; III, 39f., 63, declared by AIWAZ himself to be written “by the wisdom of Ra-Hoor-Khuit” (i.e., the True Will) and “Hadit burning in thy heart”; (3) there are other examples where a Class A instruction or note has been added to a document; and (4) the instructions of V.V.V.V.V. in *Liber XV* and *DLV* must be in Class A, though not labelled as such, by virtue of their source. *Liber 418* also seems to include Class A material.

text, as though to emphasize it? In what way is it necessary that the True Will of everyone (since “the Law is for all”)⁸¹ is to neither study nor discuss the Book, to such an extent that he or she who does so is anathema? Leah Hirsig was ostensibly expelled from the community of Thelemites for this offence.

Epistemology is a prominent topic in the Thelemic Holy Books, both in the *Book of the Law* and elsewhere. *Liber I* is all about epistemology, and it is alluded to in *Liber LXV*.⁸² Doubtless, there are other references that could be cited. It is the prime paradox of mysticism: How does one give utterance to That which is beyond utterance?⁸³ For intelligible utterance, being subject to the dualism inherent in Reason, is necessarily relative and inferior to the experiential Truth of Being, which, being supermundane, is beyond the law of non-contradiction. Such questions must weigh heavily on the mind of one engaged in the writing or reading of holy books, and we find them well reflected and expressed in the writings of Aleister Crowley. It is the special problem of a Magus $9^{\circ} = 2^{\square}$ of the A∴A∴, whose main work is to preach his Word to humanity. Moreover, hear what *Liber I* says about the task of a Magus:

Thus is the art and craft of the Magus but glamour. ... In the beginning doth the Magus speak Truth, and send forth Illusion and Falsehood to enslave the soul. Yet therein is the Mystery of Redemption. ... By a Magus is this writing made known through the mind of a Magister. The one uttereth clearly, and the other Understandeth; yet the Word is falsehood, and the Understanding darkness. And this saying is of All Truth. Nevertheless it is written; for there be times of darkness, and this as a lamp therein. ... For the curse of His grade is that he must speak Truth, that the Falsehood thereof may enslave the souls of men.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Ibid, I, 34.

⁸² See *Liber LXV*, I, 2–12, 51–56.

⁸³ Similarly, how does one utter the formula of the *New Aeon*, since anything uttered is already *old*?

⁸⁴ Op. cit., 00, 1, 5f., 14.

Thus, Crowley subtitled *Liber 333*, “The Wanderings or Falsifications of the One Thought of Frater Perdurabo (Aleister Crowley) which Thought Is Itself Untrue,” commenting that “therefore its falsifications are relatively true,”⁸⁵ and *Liber CXI* is entitled *The Book of Wisdom or Folly*. It is surprising that such a broad hint has resulted in so little commentary vis-à-vis the *Book of the Law*. In the light of these verses, let us turn our attention finally to the *Book of the Law* itself.

In addition to the verses quoted above that prove that AIWAZ did not consider Aleister Crowley to be a perfect exponent of the *Book of the Law*, he is also concerned with the same epistemological problem just discussed. In Chapter I, v. 27 (which equals ChYDH ‘riddle’), we read: “O Nuit [Being], continuous one of Heaven, let it be ever thus; that men speak not of Thee as One but as None; and let them speak not of thee at all, since thou art continuous!” In v. 32 (signifying the completion of perfection, totality), we are enjoined to “follow out the ordeals of my [Nuit’s] knowledge,” i.e., metaphysics, knowledge of Being. In addition, in v. 50 (the number of the gates of *binah*, the grade of Magister Templi $8^{\circ} = 3^{\square}$, whose essential characteristic is the transcendence of *da’at*, reason, and the acquisition of supernal, i.e., trans-rational, non-rational, or absolute intuitive understanding), we read, “let the fine be tried in intellect.” *Jnana* Yoga is the way of the “fine” (lit. ‘end,’ i.e., those who have transcended death itself). Verse 52 (the number of external salvation) is a curse against wrong thinking: “If this be not aright; if ye confound the space-marks, saying: They are one; or saying, They are many ... then expect the direful judgments [karma] of Ra Hoor Khuit [lit. Sun Hawk Self, i.e., the True Will]!” Causality as the subject-object dichotomy arises out of the primary ignorance of consciousness.

Monism and pluralism are both false, for each leads one to reject the other, whereas both 1 and 2 are equally phases of 0

⁸⁵ Op. cit., p. 4.

(all possible combinations and permutations of which add up to 666).⁸⁶ Verse 56 (the number of True Being itself) indicates the nature of true religion: "Aum! All words are sacred and all prophets true; save only that they understand a little; solve the first half of the equation, leave the second unattacked. But thou hast all in the clear light [*prabhasvara*], and some, though not all, in the dark." *Aum* is the Indian sacred syllable signifying the whole cosmic process, including birth (*a*), life (*u*), death (*m*), and immortality (*gn*).⁸⁷ Here we see the first positive indication of the religion of the New Aeon as the religion of all religions, all the differences of which are reconciled in the alembic of transcendent reason, by means of the method of *coniunctio oppositorum* (the 'union of opposites,' which Jung denominated the "transcendent function").⁸⁸

86	012
	021
	102
	120
	201
	+ 210
	666

Cf. *Liber CCXX*, I, 24f., commentary in *Liber LA*. Thus, 666 is the sum of all possible combinations and permutations of the three primary principles of existence. Cf. the combinations and permutations of the three primary principles in *Liber XXVII*.

⁸⁷ MGN = 93; AUMGN = 100.

⁸⁸ This work will take several centuries to complete, and will be based largely on the scientific study, comparison, collation, and synthesis of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism with their Western equivalents, Qabalah, Gnosticism, and Sufism, together with the substratum of all of these, shamanism (or Magick), and their absolute transcendence, Pyrrhonic-Zoroastrianism (simply called Zen), in the L.V.X. of practical mystical and magical experience. (In the long dark age of the West, Qabalah, Gnosticism, and Sufism are the kernels residing in the husks, developed to protect them from the appetite of the vulgar, commonly denominated Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, but which, being flayed by the illuminated and transcendent Reason, become the chaff of superstition, and are now in the final process of

In Chapter II, v. 5 (the number of the quintessence, or unifying element, synthesis) the foregoing thought is carried over into action (5 = Mars, strength or power): “Behold! the rituals of the old time are black. Let the evil ones be cast away; let the good ones be purged by the prophet! Then shall this Knowledge [gnosis] go aright.” In addition, in v. 6 (the number of the Sun, or illumination), “therefore is the knowledge of me [Hadit, the universal principle of differentiation or discontinuity, Mara, Satan, or Chaos, identical with MH ‘Nothing’] the knowledge of death.” That is to say, this is a transcendent knowing.

Crowley, who was committed to Buddhism and rationalism at this time, hated the *Book of the Law* – an ambivalence that never seemed to depart entirely: “O prophet! thou hast ill will to learn this writing. I see thee hate the hand & the pen; but I am stronger. Because of me in Thee which thou knewest not. for [sic] why? Because thou wast the knower, and me.”⁸⁹ Verse 12 may allude to the Buddhist doctrine of *anatman*, whereas v. 13 seems to say that Crowley’s addiction to sophistry caused him to be seduced by this doctrine and thus fail to see its self-contradictory character (i.e., who is the Self that says “no self”)?

Obviously, there is an essential unity somewhere, even if the apparent self, or ego, is transitory and ephemeral; else, the illusion itself could not have arisen. Buddhists seek to get rid of this demon by calling it Mara. Thelemites embrace it by calling it Hadit. Verse 14 appears to allude to the transcendence of the

being consumed in the fire of Science, which the vulgar call H-EL, but which the Adepts call the Day of Wrath, finally exposing the secret seed for the nourishment of those who *know*. Cf. *Liber CCXX*, II, 24: “Love one another with burning hearts; on the low men trample in the fierce lust of your pride, in the day of your wrath”). Etymologically, the “day of wrath” is Indo-Eur. *agh wer* ‘dawn of wyrd,’ with obvious solar connotations. Cf. the Vajrayana Buddhist interpretation of “wrath” as the negative polarity of Shakti and the Kalki Avatar of the Kalachakra at the consummation of the Kali Yuga.

⁸⁹ Op. cit., II, 10–13.

Reason: “Now let there be a veiling of this shrine: now let the light [L.V.X.] devour men and eat them up with blindness!” In v. 17 [violence], we learn that those who have not attained this knowledge are subject to suffering and the veil of mortality: “Hear me, ye people of sighing!/The sorrows of pain and regret/Are left to the dead and the dying,/The folk that not know me as yet.” In v. 22 (the accursed Dyad at play with the Shells) this Gnosis is identified with the Hadit, the Knower:⁹⁰ “I am the Snake that giveth Knowledge.” Thus, the knowledge of knowledge is the knowledge of Hadit, which is the knowledge of death. This is the method par excellence for entering the Abyss. For the study of meta-epistemology – the epistemology of epistemology, or the knowledge of knowing – pushed to its limit (Padmasambhava’s ‘thinking’s thinking’ [*sems-nyid*]) results in a state of insanity that leads to the transcendence of knowing itself (Crowley experienced this trance in China in 1906).⁹¹

Now we come to the famous attack on Because and the “dogs of Reason” in vv. 27–33, which includes the only positive descriptive reference to the text of the *Book of the Law* in that Book:

There is great danger in me; for who doth not understand these runes shall make a great miss. He shall fall down into the pit called Because, and there he shall perish with the dogs of Reason. Now a curse upon Because and his kin! May Because be accursèd for ever! If Will stops and cries Why, invoking Because, then Will stops & does nought. If Power asks why, then is Power weakness. Also reason is a lie; for there is a factor infinite & unknown; & all their words are skew-wise. Enough of Because! Be he damned for a dog!⁹²

⁹⁰ Op. cit., II, 10–13.

⁹¹ See *ibid*, II, 13: “thou wast the knower, and me.”

⁹² See *Liber DLV* and *Liber CDLXXIV*. Crowley recommended the study of Kant’s *Prolegomena*, Hume’s *Enquiry*, Spencer’s *First Principles*, Berkeley, Hegel’s *Logik*, *The Questions of King Milinda*, the Pali Canon, and Keynes’s *Formal Logic* to this end (one might wish to add

The verse in which the word “rune” appears is 27, which we have already identified as the gematria of ChYDH ‘riddle.’ “Rune” is therefore cognate with the mystical silence implied in Chapter I, v. 27, which we have already identified with the Sun at Midnight,⁹³ and perhaps the Khephra beetle referred to in Chapter III, v. 27. The number 27 itself is the third power of three, i.e., the highest spiritualization of the *neshamah* – *neshamah* cubed.

Moreover, what is a rune? Literally ‘whisper, secret counsel, mystery,’ OED defines a rune as a “mark having mysterious or magical powers,” “an incantation or charm denoted by magic signs.” Hence, rune staff – “a magic wand.” Indo-European *runo* connotes a mystery or a secret, as well as a technical term of magic, cognate with Old Norse *run* ‘secret writing.’ These verses appear to imply that the rational or logical exposition of the *Book of the Law* is not merely false but actually dangerous (“These are most dire,” in the Comment), not merely because of the temptation of theology to eschew the practical demands of the Great Work, but also because these words and sentences, pen on paper, rationally comprehended, are actually pernicious. Therefore, their logical study and discussion is forbidden. This explains why only the runes of the *Book of the Law* are forbidden. The study and discussion of the other Thelemic Holy Books are not forbidden because their rational or logical exposition is true. Only this interpretation explains the distinction the Comment appears to make between the two categories of holy book.

Liber AL vel Legis – the *Book of the Law* – was dictated to Crowley by AIWAZ in His capacity as Crowley’s Holy Guardian Angel in fulfillment of the task of his grade when

Wittgenstein to this list). The references to Milinda and the Pali Canon reveal that Crowley remained Buddhist despite AIWAZ. Thus, the Exempt Adept of the A∴A∴ is expected to study the *Abhidharma*.

⁹³ Op. cit., II, 27–33.

Crowley was a Minor Adept (“without”) via the path of gimel, which leads from *keter* to *tiferet* through the pseudo-*sephirah* of *da’at*. Crowley crossed the Abyss of *da’at*, thereby transcending the Reason, in October 1906, after which (in October 1907) books began to be received at will. Thus, as a Magister Templi $8^{\circ} = 3^{\square}$ of the A.:A.:, the remaining Holy Books were conveyed to V.V.V.V.V. by the Magus To Mega Therion 666 $9^{\circ} = 2^{\square}$ via the path of dalet or by AIWAZ Himself in His capacity as an Ipsissimus $10^{\circ} = 1^{\square}$ of the A.:A.: via the path of bet. In fact, one can discern the alternation between the Voices of V.V.V.V.V., To Mega Therion, and AIWAZ in the Holy Books of the A.:A.:, corresponding to *binah*, *chokhmah*, and *keter* respectively. In the latter cases, none of these writings was conveyed through the false *sephira* of *da’at*. Therefore, they are not subject to the corruption of *da’at* discussed above in connection with *Liber I*. Moreover, only the *Book of the Law* discusses historical and temporal considerations of the New Aeon. It is a Manifesto of the New Aeon, i.e., of a new social, political, ethical, cultural, and religious regime. The subject matter of the other Holy Books is purely spiritual, transcendent, and perennial.

Thus, the *Book of the Law* is peculiarly subject to Time, and indicates its apotheosis in its own transcendence in the Next Aeon of Ma’at, it may be in a hundred or ten thousand years from now, when the formula of Horus, the *Puer Aeternus*, is fully worked out.⁹⁴ AIWAZ says, “[n]or shall they who cry aloud their folly that thou meanest nought avail; thou shall reveal it: thou availest: they are the slaves of because: They are not of me.”⁹⁵

In the light of the foregoing discussion, the meaning of this verse is clear. In Chapter III, v. 11 (the number of energy

⁹⁴ “It may be a hundred or ten thousand years from now; for the computation of time is not here as there” (Crowley, *The Law Is for All* [1975; rpt. Phoenix, AZ: Falcon Press, 1985], p. 288).

⁹⁵ Op. cit., II, 54.

tending to change, or Magick itself) AIWAZ says, “[t]his shall be your only proof. I forbid argument. Conquer! That is enough.” Logical argument leads nowhere, “for there is a factor infinite & unknown; & all their words are skew wise.”⁹⁶ That is to say, one cannot answer fundamental questions by argument, only by realization, which is based on self-overcoming, viz., of reason, and the direct intuitive realization of reality, since the absolute self is grounded in absolute being.⁹⁷ He says, “[t]hat stélé they shall call the Abomination of Desolation; count well its name, & it shall be to you as 718. Why? Because of the fall of Because, that he is not there again.” The “abomination that makes desolate” is set up in place of the regular offering in the sanctuary of the Holy Covenant by a “contemptible person” that “shall come in without warning and seize the kingdom by flatteries ... and he will become strong with a small people.”

And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate he shall honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not he shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

Immediately following the advent of this king will come the end of the age, according to Daniel. However, note that AIWAZ does not say that the Stele of Revealing *is* the Abomination of Desolation, only that *they will call it that*.⁹⁸ The implication appears to be that the God of Judaism is reason (Saturn), whereas the God of the New Age of Aquarius is beyond reason, as Uranus, the ruler of Aquarius (with Saturn, note) is the next

⁹⁶ Ibid, II, 32.

⁹⁷ Therefore, the fundamental intuitions of the True Self are true, since they are given by reality itself, only they are unutterable.

⁹⁸ Op. cit., III, 19; Dan. 11:21ff., 31, 36ff.

planet beyond Saturn. He is, moreover, the planet that, while seeable, is not seen,⁹⁹ associated with revolutionary change and Magick and the eighth planet, eight being the number of regeneration and the Great Work (also sacred to Mercury, of which Uranus is a higher octave). The number 718 is $2 \times 359 =$ ShTN, Satan (lit. 'adversary'). It is also $418 + 300 =$ shin, the letter of Pentecost, called Aeon in the new Thelemic Tarot, which now bears an interpretation of the image of the Stele of Revealing on its face, as well as $666 + 52 =$ Ben Therion, the Son of the Beast. It is important to note that what is being alluded to appears to be a principle of transcendent reason, for Uranus is the principle of the new science. One thinks of the distinction between Aristotelian and Hegelian logic and Newtonianism and the transcendental rationalism of Einsteinian relativity and quantum physics. The Satanic cultus itself was a scientific, libertarian, gnostic, and literary movement (cf. the "satanic school" of Byron and Shelley).

One must not be misled into a futile anti-intellectualism by these passages.¹⁰⁰ In v. 37 (man's crown, the highest principle of the soul, *yechidah*) we read that the words of the "self-slain"

⁹⁹ Uranus is just barely discernible by the naked eye – if one knows where to look.

¹⁰⁰ "It must be understood that the highest occult attainments are possible even to people who have no intellectual knowledge whatever. But this has been in the past a source of great iniquity, as it represents an overdevelopment of one organ of the Nature at the expense of others. It is the particular object of the A.:A.: to see to it that progress is orderly and thorough. It must further be stated that although certain books have been chosen for particular study, the student is not thereby absolved from the general study of all of them. For it is important for him to make from the beginning a comprehensive effort to understand the entire system, first, because it is desirable that he should choose his practices from the whole armoury at his disposal, and, also, because as he advances he must be to some extent familiar with all these practices, so that he may be fitted to instruct those entrusted to his guidance." ("A.:A.: Curriculum," in Aleister Crowley, *The Equinox*, Vol. III, No. 1 [Detroit, MI: Universal Publishing, March 1919], p. 18).

Ankh-ef-en-khonsu, for whom the veiled sky is revealed, are truth. In addition, we discover the following concerning the *Book of the Law*: “The fool readeth this Book of the Law, and its comment; & he understandeth it not. Let him come through the first ordeal, & it will be to him as silver. Through the second, gold. Through the third, stones of precious water. Through the fourth, ultimate sparks of the intimate fire,”¹⁰¹ the latter an apparent reference to *Kundalini*, the divine feminine energy.

In the L.V.X. of the discussion so far these verses take on profound significance, for the outermost interpretation of the Book, i.e., the purely logical exposition of the uninitiated, is *avidya* (ignorance), whereas the various interpretations are arranged in a threefold hierarchy of meaning, access to which is earned. One is reminded of the passage quoted above: “follow out the ordeals of my knowledge!”¹⁰² Silver and gold clearly correspond to *yesod* and *tiferet* respectively, these being the alchemical metals attributed to Luna and Sol. The fool, then, resides in *malkuth*. By implication, then, “precious water” refers to *da’at*, for in *da’at* the personality is dissolved as by the universal solvent, and “the intimate fire” to *keter*, the essential starry self, thus tracing a vertical straight line ascending the Middle Pillar of the Tree of Life (a “middle way”). This interpretation is assisted by the numeration of the verses. 63 is the number of ABDVN, Abaddon ‘destruction, place of perdition, abyss, nether world,’ a name of hell, i.e., matter. Here the new current appears monstrous and barbaric. 64 is a number of Mercury, i.e., the illuminated or transcendent intellect or dialectical reason. Hence, the silver ordeal is the exposure of the primary process intelligence, in which the *Book of the Law* is realized as a concealed system of mystical, metaphysical, and epistemological truths. 65 is the number of Adonai, the Holy Guardian Angel. The gold ordeal is the discovery of the True Will, or the *Book of the Law* as a system of injunctions (i.e., a

¹⁰¹ Op. cit., III, 63–67.

¹⁰² Ibid, I, 32.

way of Power). 66 is the sum of the first eleven numbers, the mystical number of the *q'liphoth* and the Great Work, and the word GLGL 'wheel, whirlwind.' The crisis of *da'at* involves the perfect dissolution (solution) of the psyche in "precious water." It involves overcoming the *q'liphoth*, the demonic or wrathful aspects of the unconscious, by assimilation. Because of this ordeal, the *Book of the Law* is realized as a system of archetypal forces. Finally, 67 is the sublime number of BYNH, the Great Mother, a number of the aspiration and the grade of Magister Templi $8^\circ = 3^\square$, also represented by 71, the number of Lam, the Guru.

It is also ZYN, the path of the *coniunctio oppositorum* or transcendent Reason ("Zen"), which leads to Her from *tiferet*. In this experience, the *Book of the Law* is realized as a perfect mirror of the Self. Everything is realized as Hadit. There is no longer any dichotomy of Self and Other. The "intimate fire" is, of course, the *kundalini*.¹⁰³ Finally, v. 75 (another number of the mystery of Being, cognate with 56, discussed above) tells us that "[t]he Book of the Law is Written and Concealed." Written – for the elucidation of the fine. Concealed – from the obscuration of the foolish. And protected from profanation by virtue of the fact that the ignorant who seek to interpret it literally are literally destroyed by its falsity; as it is written, "thou shalt know &

¹⁰³ In *malloth*, the *Book of the Law* is realized as a system of experiences, i.e., the transition to the Kingdom of the Crowned and Conquering Child, on the social and political planes. In *yesod*, it is realized in the imagination as a system of symbols. In *tiferet*, it is realized consciously as the manifesto of the True Will and of self-conscious Godhood. In *da'at*, it is realized as a system of transcendental truths, each of which implies its own opposite. The realization of *keter* surpasses articulate expression and is, therefore, perfectly numinous and absolutely individual in character.

destroy the traitors.”¹⁰⁴ It is, therefore, a perfectly self-protective revelation, for those who misinterpret it are destroyed, spiritually, morally, intellectually, and physically by the “Vision of the Demon Crowley.”

The antechamber of these mysteries is modern “civilization,” which is currently being destroyed by the very forces delineated in the *Book of the Law*. As Crowley wrote, “The world may have to pass through a period of error through me, but even the error will tend to the truth.”¹⁰⁵ Therefore, we are led back to the mystery of the Comment, represented by the great mystery of Silence. Concerning this mystery, Crowley wrote:

Of all the Magical and Mystical Virtues, of all the Graces of the Soul, of all the Attainments of the Spirit, none has been so misunderstood, even when at all apprehended, as Silence. ... its nature is Pure Being, that is to say, Nothing, so that it is beyond all intellection or intuition. ... But His Nature is by no means that negative and passive silence which the word commonly connotes; for He is the All-Wandering Spirit; the Pure and Perfect Knight-Errant, who answers all Enigmas, and opens the Closed Portal of the King’s Daughter. But Silence in the vulgar sense is not the answer to the Riddle of the Sphinx; it is that which is created by that answer.¹⁰⁶

Nor is initiation to be found in the avoidance of the necessity of ratiocination, or the mere shunning of study and discussion, for the Comment is the most Zen of the Holy Books; its diminutive duration is deceptive. It stands as warden to the *Book of the Law*

¹⁰⁴ Op. cit., III, 42 (the number of the letters of a great name of God terrible and strong, and of the Assessors of the Dead, and of ChLD ‘world, worldliness’).

¹⁰⁵ Diary entry for June 10, 1923, in *The Magical Diaries of Aleister Crowley, 1923*, ed. Stephen Skinner (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1979), p. 57.

¹⁰⁶ *Little Essays Toward Truth* (1938; rpt. Luxembourg: Amazon Media, 2021), pp. 62f.

and sentinel of the sanctuary of Thelema. Those who obey it immediately find themselves *without*. Those who disobey it immediately find themselves destroyed, hacked to pieces by the double-edged sword of their own ratiocination. But those who neither obey nor disobey, but who both obey and disobey, thus transcending the dyad altogether, find themselves within the sanctuary, having transcended the dichotomies of reason and unreason, obedience and freedom, study and discussion, and all other dichotomies and contradictions, in the L.V.X. of the illuminated or transcendent Reason, for the corollary of the warning that “[w]hosoever disregards this does so at his own risk and peril” is the promise that the Book is potent to initiate.¹⁰⁷

Nor let us forget that the Prophet, Aleister Crowley, did not accept the *Book of the Law* till, having crossed the Abyss, he saw its L.V.X. for the first time, for below the Abyss the Book is folly. Therefore, he who aspires to the comprehension of the *Book of the Law* according to the method of dialectical or transcendent reason will experience a direct intellectual intuition of the transcendence of reason itself, thereby providing a glimpse and perhaps a “war engine”¹⁰⁸ for the attainment of the state of absolute transcendence of Reason represented by the grade of Magister Templi $8^{\circ} = 3^{\square}$ of the A:·A:· according to the method of *Jnana Yoga*. This is not study; it is realization. This is not discussion; it is revelation. It is M.A.A.T.

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Now we are able to answer the questions posed above with respect to the Comment, which Aleister Crowley’s commentary entirely fails to do. The Comment prohibits the study of the

¹⁰⁷ In the Comment, “These are most dire” may be read *d[dalet] ire*, the Hebrew letter plus the Latin verb ‘to go,’ which Crowley uttered as the Fifth Word of a Magus, proper to the Quintessence. Dalet, the letter ‘d,’ means ‘door.’ Thus, “to go through a door,” to initiate.

¹⁰⁸ See op. cit., III, 7, commentary in *Liber ShT*.

Book of the Law because its literal interpretation is false. Therefore its study cannot be the True Will of anyone, since the True Will, by definition, is grounded in Nuit, universal Being.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, the *Book* describes the conditions of the time. Its discussion is forbidden because the ultimate (axiomatic) truths of the *Book of the Law* can only be discovered based on direct knowledge or gnosis (nonetheless, the *Book* is profoundly philosophical). Only the *Book of the Law* is subject to these prohibitions because only the *Book of the Law* was transmitted through the refractive lens of *da'at*; only the *Book of the Law* addresses the temporality of the New Aeon; and this book of runes is written in a complex literal-symbolic rational-intuitive code.

The foregoing summary of relevant references in the *Book of the Law* shows quite clearly that there is a *secret* meaning in the *Book of the Law* that will *not be revealed by or known to* the scribe, Aleister Crowley. Yet it must be implicit in Crowley's writings, since the Comment says, "[a]ll questions of the Law are to be decided only by appeal to my writings, each for himself." We know of course what the key of it all is. It is the word AL, discovered by Charles Stansfeld Jones, and its correlative words, LA and ShT, which altogether add up to 93, the number of THELEMA. Crowley initially recognized Jones as his magical son, but in the very process of recognizing him he "fell from it," as prophesied by AIWAZ in the *Book of the Law*. Therefore, the Word was revealed and immediately *concealed* in the failure of Jones to fulfil his role as the magical heir of Aleister Crowley, which he never regained, converting to the Roman Church in 1928. While the word was revealed, *its meaning never was* and the *mystery* remains: What does this revelation actually mean? *The Book of the Law* remains a *sealed scripture*, the study and discussion of which is *forbidden*. Yet Crowley predicted the future advent of a genius who would explain the significance of the word, AL, and thereby provide the key to the decipherment

¹⁰⁹ Equivalent to dharma 'truth.'

of the *Book of the Law*. Clearly, the solution lies in the significance of this word, AL, applied as a key to the text of the *Book of the Law*.

The word AL means ‘strength, might, power,’ and derives from the Ugaritic word for god. Ugaritic refers to the city of Ugarit, in Syria, the birthplace of the alphabet. Ugaritic was a precursor of Biblical Hebrew. Ugarit was not discovered till 1929, 25 years after the dictation of the *Book of the Law* (hence, it was *not known* to Crowley as the scribe of the *Book of the Law*). The city was destroyed in the 12th century BCE. The pictogram of AL (pronounced ‘eyl’ or ‘el’) represents a strong controller or sovereign. Hadit refers homophonically to Hadad (Adad), a Northwest Semitic storm and rain god identified with Baal. The symbolic animal of Hadad was the bull. He was equated with Egyptian Set and Indian Indra, among others. The Hebrew word AL also means ‘above, over, upon, against.’ However, the *Book of the Law* makes it clear that it cannot be separated from its metathesis, LA, which refers to the *negative* (also, ignorance, *avijja*). Thus, AL-LA¹¹⁰ is the God that is *The Not*. This is the central revelation of the *Book of the Law*, not merely that God is *Not* (i.e., atheism), but also that God is emptiness. Cf. the *Book of the Law*: “I am alone: there is no God where I am” (II, 23). 23 = the glyph of life – nascent life. If one adds Set = ShT = 31 (the sum of *Atus* XX and XI), one gets 93, the number of Thelema, the True Will.

The foregoing considerations clearly show that the *Book of the Law* is a mystical scripture with an *inner or secret meaning* that transcends the literal meaning and the understanding of its scribe, Aleister Crowley. This meaning refers to the realization of the interior godhead of perfect illumination of and by the absolute individual, which is identical with the True Will.

¹¹⁰ Remembering that at the time of the writing of the *Book of the Law* Crowley was studying Islamic magic and Sufi mysticism, and regarded Muhammad as his personal precursor. AL-LA = Allah.

Moreover, the letters א + ל = ‘ox goad,’ i.e., that which controls or directs the raw animal energy of the ox (or bull, see above). Aleph is the ox, strength, or leader, the “father” of the Hebrew alphabet. It is silent. Lamedh is the tallest and central or middle letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which in English is pronounced 'el,' symbolizing aspiration, contemplation of the heart, and spiritual work. It is the only Hebrew letter that “ascends above the head” (the *sahasrara chakra*). Lam is the name of a mysterious portrait drawn by Aleister Crowley, depicting an entity who Crowley referred to as his “guru” or lama.

By such methods as are adumbrated above, when every letter is realized as a star and every verse speaks volumes, the *Book of the Law* may be realized as a truly universal scripture. As Crowley said, “All the meanings are true, if only the interpreter be illuminated; but if not, they are all false, even as he is false.”¹¹¹

¹¹¹ “The Initiated Interpretation of Ceremonial Magic.”

THE COMMENT

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

The study of this Book is forbidden. It is wise to destroy this copy after the first reading.

Whosoever disregards this does so at his own risk and peril. These are most dire.

Those who discuss the contents of this Book are to be shunned by all, as centres of pestilence.

All questions of the Law are to be decided only by appeal to my writings, each for himself.

There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.

Love is the law, love under will.

The priest of the princes,

Ankh-f-n-khonsu
⌚⌚⌚

Relevant Quotations from the *Book of the Law*

My scribe Ankh-af-na-khonsu, the priest of the princes, shall not in one letter change this book; but lest there be folly, he shall comment thereupon by the wisdom of Ra-Hoor-Khu-it. (I, 36)

The sun, universal symbol of divine life and illumination, is Ra in Egyptian symbolism, Hoor-Khuit referring to “the flesh of Hoor,” Horus, Egyptian *har*, the falcon, the distant one, or the one who is above. Crowley wrote several commentaries, but he only considered the Comment to be inspired (see below).

Change not as much as the style of a letter; for behold! thou, o prophet, shalt not behold all these mysteries hidden therein. (I, 54)

AIWAZ reemphasizes that the letters of the *Book of Law* are significant and must be preserved exactly. Moreover, he asserts that these letters hide mysteries that will not be known to Aleister Crowley. However, if the Book contains mysteries that Crowley would not know, how can Crowley's commentary be definitive? This creates a paradox, which demands resolution.

The child of thy bowels, he shall behold them. (I, 55)

Crowley will give birth to the child as a mother from his [sic] womb. Clearly, the child is spiritual, not physical. Yet Crowley tried to “beget” this child physically, magically empowered, doubtless interpreting “child of thy bowels” as referring to his sperm. The androgynous symbolism is obvious, however.

Expect him not from the East, nor from the West; for from no expected house cometh that child. Aum! All words are sacred and all prophets true; save only that they understand a little; solve the first half of the equation, leave the second unattacked. But thou hast all in the clear light, and some, though not all, in the dark. (I, 56)

The arrival of the child is unexpected. It cannot be planned for or produced intentionally. In fact, the coming of the child is mysterious. AIWAZ affirms that the perennial philosophy is true, but that each system represents only one part of the

elephant. Therefore, even Aleister Crowley does not understand the whole: “the goal of teleology is unknown.”

Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains. O prophet! thou hast ill will to learn this writing. I see thee hate the hand & the pen; but I am stronger. Because of me in Thee which thou knewest not. for why? Because thou wast the knower, and me. (II, 9–13)

Crowley resists the challenge that AIWAZ is making to Crowley's Buddhist world-view.

There is great danger in me; for who doth not understand these runes shall make a great miss. He shall fall down into the pit called Because, and there he shall perish with the dogs of Reason. Now a curse upon Because and his kin! May Because be accursed for ever! (II, 27–29)

AIWAZ refers to the words and letters of the *Book of the Law* as runes, from PIE *ru-no*, source of Gaelic *run* ‘secret, mystery, craft,’ cognate with Welsh, German, Celtic, and Old English roots. These runes cannot be understood rationally. They are therefore symbols, which can only be understood intuitively. The implication is that the *Book of the Law* “encodes” ultimate, trans-rational information. Presumably, therefore, the coding itself is non-rational. Although Crowley discovered a number of symbolic words and numbers, and symbolic references in the *Book of the Law*, no comprehensive wisdom system or “Qabalah” has ever emerged out of the *Book of the Law*. The spiritual development of the system became frozen in place due to the “abortion” of Charles Stansfeld Jones. Crowley accepted Jones's resignation from the A.:A.: on September 24, 1925. He wrote the Comment in November 1925.¹¹² Crowley wrote his

¹¹² Crowley had already been ruminating about the Comment in connection with Norman Mudd's apparent doubts two years before. “O.P.V. [Mudd] had discussed ‘What is good evidence?’ It has got me going. The existence of ‘evidence’ of any kind involves so many arbitrary assumptions that I simply give up! But is not this one more token of the nature of Analysis? It inevitably destroys all coherence in

exoteric commentary on the *Book of the Law* between 1919 and 1922.¹¹³ Hitler published *Mein Kampf* in 1925 and 1926. No one has yet emerged to succeed the prophet himself, certainly not Grady Louis McMurtry.

Nor shall they who cry aloud their folly that thou meanest nought avail; thou shall reveal it: thou availest: they are the slaves of because: They are not of me. The stops as thou wilt; the letters? change them not in style or value! (II, 54)

AIWAZ reassures the prophet that he will transmit the wisdom beyond reason, i.e., real spiritual truth, accurately and completely. But then AIWAZ cautions the scribe once more to preserve the letters of the *Book of the Law*, without regard to the punctuation.

Thou shalt obtain the order & value of the English Alphabet; thou shalt find new symbols to attribute them unto. (II, 55)

AIWAZ informs Crowley that he will discover new mysteries in the English letters, paralleling the Hebrew Qabalistic system.

ideas, at the end of the journey. Synthesis is then an act of pure will, which through touch of Reason would disintegrate. ‘Conquer! That is enough.’ My job is to construct an Universe according to my Will as expressed in *Liber CCXX*. *I must issue orders to forbid all analytical work.* (Query what this may mean: what of the Comment?)” (*The Magical Diaries of Aleister Crowley*, 1923, p. 72 [diary entry dated June 20 at 12:20 a.m.]; italics added). The complete and perfect exegesis of the *Book of the Law* is the synthesis of all possible exegeses. Such a task is not only impossible in practice, it is also impossible in theory since the number of all possible interpretations, and the sum of all points of view, is infinite. Cf. *Liber CCXX*, I, 4, 22; II, 32. The end of the words is Silence (see Crowley, *Little Essays Toward Truth*, [Chap. 14]). This is quite different from the notion that the *Book of the Law* means “whatever I want it to mean,” which is really the silence of ignorance and demonstrably false, unless one already knows one’s True Will, similar to the false interpretation of “Do what thou wilt” as “Do as you like.” Cf. the assertion of the Comment that Crowley has the last word, which Crowley both reiterated and denied.

¹¹³ See Israel Regardie, ed., *The Law Is for All*.

AIWAZ' implication is that there are secret ciphers in the *Book of the Law*.

Aye! listen to the numbers & the words: 4 6 3 8 A B K 2 4 A L G M O R 3 Y X 24 89 R P S T O V A L. What meaneth this, o prophet? Thou knowest not; nor shalt thou know ever. There cometh one to follow thee: he shall expound it. (II, 75, 76)

AIWAZ provides an example. Crowley deciphered RPSTOVAL, but the solution to the rest of the puzzle eluded him. Crowley established this as a test for anyone claiming to be his successor. It has yet to be deciphered.¹¹⁴ The “one to follow thee” is not necessarily “the child.”

Deem not too eagerly to catch the promises; fear not to undergo the curses. Ye, even ye, know not this meaning all. (III, 16)

¹¹⁴ The riddle is clearly divided into nine groups. There are 11 numbers and 19 letters, for a total of 30. AIWAZ says we are to “listen” to the “words,” suggesting that these letters (and numbers?) are, or stand for, actual words. Crowley derives 418 from RPSTOVAL by taking ST (Set), based on the Tarot trumps, and AL (God) as 31. There is another AL, making 93 in total (thus, the secret code discovered by Jones is implied here too). In addition, several allusions are reasonably clear, including the paternal principle (ABK), the secret (Y) of the Ordeal X = NOX (which adds up to 100 or 220, depending on whether one takes X as tsade or 210), the Ordeal of the Abyss, and the dyad returning to the void by means of the 8 (RP = 280; see *Liber LVIII*). RPSTOVAL is 8 = 418, the Great Work, as stated above, which Crowley glosses as referring to Leo, the solar-martial energy, force (teth) and fire (shin), (Tantric) pride and might. The number of the verse in which the riddle appears equals ChBYVN 'secret, hiding place.' In his old comment to the Book Crowley refers to the riddle as “[a] final revelation.” Thus it encodes the final or ultimate secret of the Way of Thelema (FINIS = 210). Yetziratic analysis of the letters reveals further allusions to the triplicity of *bindu* (Tao or Mercury), yoni (Luna or *Kteis*), and lingam (Sol or Phallus) (cf. *Liber XXVII* and *Liber CCXVI*).

AIWAZ reasserts that Crowley will not understand the *Book of the Law* completely. Therefore, Crowley's commentary cannot be complete. Cheekily, he refers to the secret key of "all" = AL (one interpretation of which might be pantheism). YH (i.e., God, the Tetragrammaton, the divine Self) knows that the meaning of the Book refers to the potential divine power or Shakti that abides dormant in emptiness.

All this and a book to say how thou didst come hither and a reproduction of this ink and paper for ever – for in it is the word secret & not only in the English – and thy comment upon this the Book of the Law shall be printed beautifully in red ink and black upon beautiful paper made by hand; and to each man and woman that thou meetest, were it but to dine or to drink at them, it is the Law to give. Then they shall chance to abide in this bliss or no; it is no odds. Do this quickly! (III, 39)

The word or message of the *Book of the Law* is secret and includes covert references to non-English tongues, perhaps translations (see below).

But the work of the comment? That is easy; and Hadit burning in thy heart shall make swift and secure thy pen. (III, 40)

The Comment will be an inspired (Class A) communication.

This book shall be translated into all tongues: but always with the original in the writing of the Beast; for in the chance shape of the letters and their position to one another: in these are mysteries that no Beast shall divine. Let him not seek to try: but one cometh after him, whence I say not, who shall discover the Key of it all. Then this line drawn is a key: then this circle squared in its failure is a key also. And Abrahadabra. It shall be his child & that strangely. Let him not seek after this; for thereby alone can he fall from it. (III, 47)

AIWAZ reaffirms that there are mysteries in the letters of the *Book of the Law* in relation to each other (i.e., words) that Crowley will never understand. One will come after him from an unknown place who will discover the key by which these mysteries may be understood. Crowley accepted Charles

Stansfeld Jones's discovery of the key-word AL to be this word. The slash across the manuscript of the *Book of the Law* adds up to 418, a key number of the Law that is also the number of ABRAHADABRA. Jones's discovery was premature, precipitated magically by Crowley's act of sex magick to beget a magical child, against which AIWAZ specifically warns Crowley. Subsequently, Jones's "birth" was aborted and he never explained or interpreted the message of the *Book of the Law* based on this key, which in its simplest expression means the divine power or energy (*shakti* or AL).¹¹⁵

Now this mystery of the letters is done, and I want to go on to the holier place. (III, 48)

Again, AIWAZ refers to the mystery of the letters.

There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt. (III, 60)

Somehow, this is all in accordance with the True Will qua True Will. Therefore, it is universal and binding.

Paste the sheets from right to left and from top to bottom: then behold! There is a splendour in my name hidden and glorious, as the sun of midnight is ever the son. (III, 73, 74)

AIWAZ apparently directs Crowley to publish the holograph manuscript of the *Book of the Law* backwards. The Enochian tongue was dictated to Dee and Kelley backwards because the words when spoken forwards are potent words of power or mantras. Hebrew and Chinese may also be written from right to left. The reference to backwards writing may be a reference to the twilight language. Thus, AIWAZ is implying that the words of the *Book of the Law* are mantras. Mantras are strings of sounds or words, consisting of a mixture of an especially meaningful or sacred language, gibberish, or glossolalia, and symbols and symbolic-cognitive references. Mantras exhibit

¹¹⁵ Jones had an intimation that the mystic meaning of the *Book of the Law* has something to do with *reversal*, but he never really explicated this intuition properly because of his lack of initiation.

peculiar metrical qualities and an interior sense, and are often communicated using a highly symbolic “twilight language.” The twilight language is often difficult to understand. The audible repetition of mantras, often for long periods, entrain the brain and thus precipitate spiritual experiences in one psychologically prepared. Tibetan Buddhists commonly recite certain mantras hundreds of thousands or even millions of times. Such mantras may or may not be facilitated by the use of entheogens. Symbolically the emphasis on reversal may imply a “backwards” or “reverse” way of reading the text of the *Book of the Law* itself, perhaps in the manner of Hebrew Qabalah. The twilight language is meant to transmit subtle and visionary insights incorporating pre-linguistic, experiential, and symbolic levels of consciousness. Symbolism is the first articulate expression of the ultimate level of consciousness and reality, and is vital to philosophy and art. Symbols or patterns are the information “stuff” that constitutes reality, matter itself being nothing but an inchoate chaos of potentiality. The sun of midnight is the realization of transcendent wisdom or illuminated consciousness in the darkness of N.O.X., i.e., nirvana (cf. the “Dark Refuge”).

The Book of the Law is Written and Concealed. Aum. Ha. (III, 75)

AIWAZ concludes with the reiterated reference to the mysterious, hidden, runic, or secret meaning of the *Book of the Law*, and provides a hint – *Aum* and *Ha* are Sanskrit words of power, alluding to the Indian tradition, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Tantra. The addition of “*ha*,” a Tantric word of power, is significant. HA is the unaspirated h – the Hebrew he depicting the attitude of worship and the breath – followed by the exhalation into A, the first letter representing what one might call “the spirit.” Called the *visarga*, lit. ‘sound’ or ‘transmission,’ it expresses the innate power of manifestation that is *shakti* (divine energy), connoting the vibratory union of Shiva and Shakti, the Vajrayana Buddhist *yab-yum*. In Hinduism it is referred to as the heart of Shiva, but in Buddhism it is a powerful symbol of the ultimate emptiness of the Tathagata's abode. In *Magick in Theory and Practice*, Crowley associates the Indian word of power,

AUM(GN), with the formula of the New Aeon, once again bringing his work into relation with Tibetan Buddhism. Crowley also produced a picture of a “lama” (Lam) that Crowley referred to as his guru. Both AUM and HA relate to the innate power of breath or *prana*. HA (or AHA) is the spontaneous humour of the epiphanic awakening into the blissful lucidity of enlightenment (cf. the Vision of Laughter in *Little Essays Toward Truth*).¹¹⁶ The Egyptian god Ha is called the “Lord of the Transfigured Ones.” In Sanskrit, it refers to the solar breath or exhalation (cf. *Liber CCXX*, II, 63). Thus, in the final syllable the entire message of the *Book of the Law* is vibrated in the heart or *anahata chakra*, which is how Crowley experienced the voice of AIWAZ too. The *Book of the Law* begins and ends with Ha (Had), identifying the Sumerian-Egyptian and *mantra-yana* traditions. Hadad is the Northwest Semitic and ancient Mesopotamian storm and rain god identified with Egyptian Set, the complement of Horus and the god of desert heat.

Spiritual realization is “each for himself,” a phrase also found in the Pali Canon. Therefore, discussion is forbidden. Those who discuss the Book are automatically outside the fold. Yet the Book predicts one to come after, and Crowley recognizes this in his writings. Therefore, when the inner meaning of the *Book of the Law* is spontaneously realized and spoken by the Coming One, exotericism will be superseded and a new Order of the Sun will arise, the *Almanbudhayn* (المانبودي ن), from PIE *keu* ‘hide, conceal.’ Cf. OE *scunian* ‘seek safety by concealment,’ separating itself from the fundamentalist exoteric literalists who represent the inferior, first matter of the work. The Shunned, like Tantra, will be a secret and despised order of initiates like the Sufis or the A:A:.. *This order will arise when the symbols are equilibrated.*

¹¹⁶ Similarly, when Osho attained enlightenment he said he laughed.

VI

Towards a Positive Interpretation of the Law of Thelema

Is Thelema Alt-Right?

The recent expulsion of an American far-right activist, who has claimed to be an Ipsissimus of the A∴A∴, from the Caliphate pseudo-O.T.O. (née Agape Lodge) and his run for United States Senate gives rise to an important question: Is Thelema alt-right? This question is exacerbated by several references to extreme violence in the *Book of the Law*, including anti-altruism, repression, total war, anti-populism, anti-democracy, classism, genocide, cannibalism, human sacrifice, and torture, suggestive of the Old Testament. Apparently intensely antisocial passages like these have attracted some adherents of the alt-right to Thelema, but do these passages actually advocate the things that they describe, or do they merely describe the way things would go in the 20th and 21st centuries (in which case the *Book of the Law* is clearly a prophetic document of the first water), and is the Law of Thelema itself actually compatible with alt-right ideology?

The alt-right is a heterogeneous but influential group. One can abstract the following fundamental tenets of the movement from the Wikipedia article on the alt-right. Based on this article, the alt-right advocates:

- White supremacy, white nationalism, and nativism;
- Ethnic cleansing;
- White genocide conspiracy theory;
- Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism;
- Isolationism and protectionism;
- Islamophobia;
- Antifeminism and misogyny;
- Homophobia;
- Populism;
- Limited government and lower taxes while also advocating authoritarian government and militarism, despite framing their beliefs in terms of political freedom;
- Law and order;
- Anti-multiculturalism and anti-immigration;
- Opposition to miscegenation; and
- Collectivism and tribalism.

The question that Thelemites (or purported Thelemites) who embrace these theories and others like them raise is: Is the alt-right consistent with the Law of Thelema? Let us look at each point in turn, beginning with Crowley's documented attitude to Nazism. The term "alt-right" has been regarded as a blind for Nazism, and the Nazis shared virtually all of the beliefs cited. Crowley was 63 when World War II broke out, and although Crowley recognized some similarities between Adolf Hitler's rhetoric and the *Book of the Law* (based on *Hitler Speaks*, which was subsequently exposed as a forgery), Crowley specifically and publicly repudiated both fascism and Nazism as "abortions" of the New Aeon, much as Heidegger, Mircea Eliade, and Julius Evola did when they described Nazism as an early but flawed response to the rise of modernism, thus decisively separating the Law of Thelema from fascism and Nazism.

Crowley specifically repudiated anti-Semitism, declaring the Jews to be the only civilized group in Germany. Far from recognizing Thelema as a kindred movement, the National Socialist Party repressed Thelema in Germany and Crowley's personal representative, Karl Germer, barely escaped to America

with his life. Crowley himself was expelled from his Abbey of Thelema in Sicily by Italian fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, who Crowley subsequently lampooned in a poem. Crowley himself had relations with members of all races, including Jews and Blacks, and was bisexual, openly and actively promoting gay rights at a time when homosexuality was illegal. Far from advocating nativist xenophobia and nationalism, Crowley was militantly cosmopolitan¹¹⁷ and created a spiritual system that incorporated the spiritual beliefs and practices of many different races, including Hebraic Qabalah and Islamic Sufism. He even referred to himself in *The Equinox of the Gods* as Christian.

As far as the sexes go, the *Book of the Law* is clear: “Every man and every woman is a star.” The sexes are equal, and in fact, women, who Crowley valued for their oracular capabilities, mediated all of Crowley’s advanced initiations. Far from being populist, AIWAZ despises nativism, populism, collectivism, and tribalism: “Ye are against the people, O my chosen!” It is significant that virtually all the people who advocate alt-right ideology are self-defined populists. Crowley saw very clearly that democracy would result in a race to the bottom. Far from celebrating it, he condemned it and despised all forms of populism and popular culture.

Far from being against government, the *Book of the Law*, like Laozi, advocates a benign government of an elect: “Let my servants be few & secret: they shall rule the many & the known. These are fools that men adore; both their Gods & their men are fools.” In his political writings, Crowley makes it clear that in order for the body politic to be free, it must be highly organized. Lack of organization does not result in freedom, but in disorder, which destroys freedom. However, far from

¹¹⁷ See his “The Jewish Problem Restated” (*English Review*, July 1922, reprinted in *The Revival of Magick and Other Essays* [Tempe, AZ: New Falcon Publications, 1998], pp. 145–155). This essay definitively refutes any suggestion that Crowley was anti-Semitic.

supporting authoritarianism, Crowley implies that people should be actively required to defend their rights, including property rights, in a system of competitive but mutually respectful individualism.

In this way, the fitness of the body politic is promoted. However, when we analyze the beliefs of the alt-right in detail, we find that its defence of “freedom of speech” is really a sham, and that their true ideology is essentially totalitarian. Against these beliefs, we can posit their Thelemic equivalents. The Law of Thelema advocates:

- The total freedom and perfect equality of all races and sexual orientations and both sexes, including multiculturalism and miscegenation;
- Universalism, internationalism, and free trade, including the free movement of all peoples around the earth, which logically implies a global mixed race civilization (see *Liber OZ*);
- Freedom of conscience;
- Gender equity;
- The equal rights of all sexual minorities, including homosexuals, and a high tolerance for sexual diversity;
- Anti-populism, anti-collectivism, anti-tribalism, anti-nativism;
- A strong, organized state committed to establishing the universal conditions of individual liberty through progressive education and rational jurisprudence;
- A laissez faire attitude to policing, law, and order; and
- The right of self-defence.
- It is worth noting that *Liber Oz* does not include any specific right to property. These principles were enshrined in *Liber OZ* in 1941, at the peak of the war hysteria.

LIBER LXXXVII



"the law of
the strong:
this is our law
and the joy
of the world."
— AL. II. 21

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."
— AL. I. 40
"thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no
other shall say nay." — AL. I. 42–3
"Every man and every woman is a star." — AL. I. 3

There is no god but man.

1. Man has the right to live by his own law —
to live in the way that he wills to do:
to work as he will:
to play as he will:
to rest as he will:
to die when and how he will.
2. Man has the right to eat what he will:
to drink what he will:
to dwell where he will:
to move as he will on the face of the earth.
3. Man has the right to think what he will:
to speak what he will:
to write what he will:
to draw, paint, carve, etch, mould, build as he will:
to dress as he will.
4. Man has the right to love as he will: —
"take your fill and will of love as ye will,
when, where and with whom ye will." — AL. I. 51
5. Man has the right to kill those who would thwart
these rights.
"the slaves shall serve." — AL. II. 58
"Love is the law, love under will." — AL. I. 57

Aleister Crowley, Liber Oz, 1941. Public domain.

Crowley favoured the decriminalization and indeed the use of all drugs, opposed by most rightists, but widely supported today as the total failure of the authoritarian "war against drugs" becomes increasingly apparent. The end of the Aeon of Osiris even implies the end of six thousand years of patriarchy. It should be clear from the foregoing that Thelema is utterly incompatible with the alt-right. Therefore, no Thelemite can embrace both

without contradiction and cannot, therefore, be doing their True Will, the terms and conditions of which are described in the *Book of the Law*. As Crowley pointed out, there is nothing *völkisch* about it. “Refuse none, but thou shalt know & destroy the traitors”; “Man has the right to kill those who would thwart these rights.” Crowley goes so far as to embrace socialism in the constitution of the O.T.O. (see “Liber CLVI,” in *The Equinox*, Vol. III, No. 1, esp. pp. 232–38).

Towards a Positive Interpretation of the Book of the Law

*... there is a secret interpretation, which, being hidden as it is hidden, is presumably of even graver importance than the text as it stands. ... We know (a) the Book means more than it appears to mean, (b) this inner meaning may modify, or even reverse, the outer meaning. (Aleister Crowley, *Magick Without Tears*)*

Aleister Crowley’s reputation as “the wickedest man in the world” overshadows everything he did, and I certainly cannot be accused of soft-peddalling Crowley’s shadow. Ab-ul-diz even declared Crowley to be the “demon” of the Aeon. However, a careful study of the *Book of the Law* reveals that, contrary to the alt-right interpretation based on the literal or outer meaning of the Book, a more profound and positive interpretation of the Law of Thelema is not only possible, but necessary if we are to avoid irreparable calamity, for the alt-right is certainly not libertarian, despite pretensions to the contrary. In his Introduction to the *Book of the Law*, Crowley says that the New Aeon of Horus, the Crowned and Conquering Child, supersedes the cultural “formula” of Osiris, “the Dying God,” which he specifically identifies with Patriarchy. Thus, the New Aeon implies the end of Patriarchy, which has in fact become a major theme of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Patriarchy may be defined as the political, moral, and social ideology that justifies and defends the dictatorship of the male gender, including the denial of legal status to women and the exclusive control of property and wealth by men. Patriarchy denies status to and actively discriminates against non-binary-gender-conforming persons, including lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals, and queers (LGBTQ) – precisely the people targeted, along with Jews, by Adolf Hitler, and also despised by the alt-right, including but not limited to religious fascists. The *Book of the Law* implies that the age of normative patriarchy, the advent of which scholars date to between 12,000 and 3100 BCE, is coming to an end, and that as the New Aeon progresses we will see the decline and ultimate disappearance of such notions as gender, masculine dominance, and female inferiority, and the rise of non-conforming gender choices and alternative sexualities and lifestyles including homosexuality, transsexuality, and the redefinition or abolition of marriage. This is alluded to or implied throughout the *Book of the Law*, for example:

Every man and every woman is a star.

*O man! refuse not thy wife, if she will! O lover, if thou wilt, depart!
There is no bond that can unite the divided but love: all else is a curse.*

*... take your fill and will of love as ye will, when, where and with
whom ye will!*

Another significant but typically overlooked passage in the Introduction to the *Book of the Law* is Crowley's statement that Fascism and Communism alike are "abortive births" of the New Aeon. An abortion is literally a miscarriage or expulsion of the fetus before it is viable, but it is equally important to recognize that a fetus is a potentially viable human being, not merely a monster. Thus, Crowley implies two things. First, that Fascism and Communism are flawed but equally valid interpretations of the New Aeon, and are thus not entirely devoid of meaning, value, or significance in that context. This is very much like the position of Heidegger vis-à-vis Nazism.

This is especially significant with respect to the Left. Thus, Crowley himself toyed with fascist, Stalinist, and even Fordist frameworks for the development of the New Aeon, without necessarily committing to any of them. He speculated that industrialism would collapse and society regress to a feudal state. Crowley too was searching for the proper interpretation of the formula of the new epoch. Although Crowley appears to reject Socialism, he implies that Communism is more honest than, and therefore preferable to, Fascism.¹¹⁸

Crowley's basic objection is that both Fascism and Socialism/Communism restrict rather than foster the liberty of the individual, and are thus inherently maladaptive, since progress is the result of the antisocial innovations of individuals as they adapt to changing circumstances. On the other hand, Crowley recognizes with perfect clarity that the liberty of the individual is only guaranteed by a strong and effective organization that is dedicated to that principle: "The absolute principle of the state shall be a function of the absolute liberty of each individual will."¹¹⁹ This does not sound at all like autocracy, minarchy, or anarchy. Thus, it seems that Crowley is moving toward a more libertarian socialist position rather than the anti-government hysteria that we have come to associate with the American alt-right, which, like Capitalism, is actually collectivist and conformist in principle, despite deceptive denials. Crowley

¹¹⁸ Nor was Crowley averse from fraternizing with and accepting as a disciple one Thomas Driberg, despite the latter's Leninist interpretation of *Liber CCXX*, I, 10 (the number of *Malkuth* 'kingdom'): "I joined the Communist Party partly because it was the one party which had the sense to see that the 19th century Liberal-Democratic idea was a sham, and that the majority could always be led and controlled by an intelligent and clear-sighted minority" (quoted in John Symonds, *The Beast 666*, p. 417). Driberg went on to become a British Labour M.P. P.R. Stephensen, Crowley's publisher and friend, was also a Communist.

¹¹⁹ "The Scientific Solution of the Problem of Government."

always rejects collectivism, even when it masquerades as freedom (e.g., wage slavery, etc.).

The appearance of the New Aeon is predicated on the collapse of all pre-established orthodoxies and orders: "Abrogate are all rituals, all ordeals, all words and signs." They are all "skew-wise." As a result, the individual emerges for the first time as an "own-goal," in contrast to all previous social systems based on the dominance of one or a few. The New Age is, pre-eminently, the Age of the Absolute Individual, with mobocracy as its flawed opening gambit.

This implies a sequence of stages as the world searches for a new system of social organization based on this premise. The first stage is chaos, as all established authorities break down with nothing to replace them. This is where we are now. The complete breakdown of social order is accompanied, as one might expect, by universal social disorder, despair, violence, and war: "Now let it be first understood that I am a god of War and of Vengeance. I shall deal hardly with them"; "I will give you a war-engine. With it ye shall smite the peoples; and none shall stand before you"; "this is the Law of the Battle of Conquest: thus shall my worship be about my secret house"; "Worship me with fire & blood; worship me with swords & with spears"; "let blood flow to my name"; "ye shall be strong in war;" "I am the warrior Lord of the Forties."

According to the classical Greek theory of anacyclosis, society progresses through six stages in which monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy inevitably degenerate into tyranny, oligarchy, and mobocracy (ochlocracy). Personally, Crowley was a social reactionary whose advocacy of "aristocratic revolution" is really a return to the rule of kings (at the same time he recognizes that the doctrine of the "right of kings" is bankrupt). According to Polybius, the people will become corrupt, develop a sense of entitlement, and tend toward the acceptance of pandering demagogues like Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping,

etc., resulting in chaos and the rise of a singular demagogue, bringing the cycle back to the original state of monarchy/kingship. One can see this in Crowley's proposals for the constitution of the O.T.O., for example, which is an absolute autocracy. However, a deeper understanding of the *Book of the Law* based on Crowley's essay, "The Scientific Solution of the Problem of Government," clearly shows that the objective of the New Aeon, at least in theory, is to end anacyclosis altogether by reconciling the dichotomy of one and many, by creating a transcendental system of social organization where the contradiction is resolved, much as in the Marxist/Hegelian dialectic, in a society based on the cooperation of free individuals (thus redefining aristocracy from the few to the many, which has been called "aristocratic communism").¹²⁰

The New Aeon cannot represent a *return* to the past by definition. Crowley himself says that the constitution of the O.T.O. includes socialism (see especially "Liber CLXI" in *The Equinox*, Vol. III, No. 1, esp. pp. 232–36). Now we are beginning to see how this might be done in practice in such neglected movements and philosophies as Howard Scott's technocracy movement, R. Buckminster Fuller's "design revolution," Jacque Fresco's Venus Project, the arcologies of Paolo Soleri, Dr. Richard Wolf, etc., rather than a return to Feudalism, but first there must supervene the "day of wrath," when all established systems are overwhelmed and destroyed by the internecine conflicts that we see today, compounded by Climate Change, economic breakdown, and, perhaps, nuclear or biological war: "I will give you a war-engine. With it ye shall smite the peoples; and none shall stand before you."¹²¹ James Lovelock, the founder of Gaia Theory, has speculated that

¹²⁰ "Aristocratic Communism. The system of give all to and take all from is really good economics, if only people can be persuaded to stop *counting against each other*. Only those who are noble and intelligent enough to grasp the principle will be able to profit by this (quoted in John Symonds, *The Beast* 666, p. 537).

¹²¹ *Liber CCXX*, III, 7f.

approximately 88% of the human population will be wiped out because of Climate Change.¹²² This is where we find ourselves today.

Crowley himself could not imagine this development fully because of the primitive state of the science of his day and the complete absence of computerization, and his socialization as a late 19th century British imperialist patriarchal nationalist, so he tended to interpret the *Book of the Law* along these lines, encouraged by the rise of fascism, as he himself states. In the wake of the collapse of collectivism and all established order, mobocracy must yield to autocracy, in accordance with the ancient Greek dictum, but all autocracies inevitably collapse under the weight of their own internal contradictions and, therefore, be succeeded by a system of social reconstruction premised on the liberty of the individual. Thus, Thelema reconciles authoritarianism and individualism. According to the *Book of the Law* this new system of social organization will have certain characteristics, including:

- The equality of the sexes (women's liberation, feminism);
- Sexual freedom;
- Non-differentiation (non-discrimination);
- Free and voluntary association;
- Universal prosperity;
- Personal autonomy.

In its rejection of altruism the Book of the Law specifically repudiates anti-individualistic self-sacrifice as the method of progress, for altruistic self-sacrifice does not resolve the underlying disorder that produces social injustice in the first place, but merely exacerbates it.¹²³

¹²² "Doomsday Pending: James Lovelock on The Hour," May 27, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRQ-NqaYFzs>. "I am eight, and one in eight (*Liber CCXX*, II, 15).

¹²³ Cf. G.B. Shaw, *Man and Superman* (1903).

Rather, the Book advocates a system of social organization where every individual is encouraged and indeed educated to maximize their “own-being” which, being immanent, should not conflict with the true self-interest of others, such conflict as arises being a sign that one or both parties are acting contrary to natural law, thus establishing a perfectly egalitarian yet individualistic system. This can only occur when the state is organized to maximize the individuation of its members, as stated in “The Scientific Solution of the Problem of Government.” While the application of the Law of Thelema to jurisprudence may still be obscure, its application has become a well-known theory of modern education, although unfortunately inconsistently implemented. Thus, Aleister Crowley, to his credit, may be regarded as a pioneer of modern education, such as is being practised in Finland and elsewhere.

It is an open question whether the uncanny voice of AIWAZ, as Crowley described it, devoid of any human quality, was describing what might be termed the shadow of the New Aeon or advocating it. Crowley based *The Law Is for All* on the latter assumption, but this might be questioned today. Can we really know the telos of a preterhuman intelligence, or the influence of Crowley’s psyche on the message? However you slice it, it is clear we are entering an age of extreme turmoil.

Selected Quotations

Every man and every woman is a star. (I, 3)

Men and women are morally, socially, and politically equal.
Feminism, women's liberation, the end of Patriarchy.

Let my servants be few & secret: they shall rule the many & the known.
(I, 10)

A technocratic state of experts (see "The Scientific Solution of the Problem of Government," 8), i.e., "scientific socialism," establishes the conditions of liberty on a scientific basis for all without regard to the vagaries of electoral mobocracy. Cf. Crowley's comments on Chinese bureaucracy in *Konx Om Pax*. (Ezra Pound also admired Confucianism.)

Bind nothing! Let there be no difference made among you between any one thing & any other thing; for thereby there cometh hurt. (I, 22)

Non-differentiation, non-discrimination.

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. (I, 40)

The rule of Law guarantees the universal conditions of individual liberty, as distinct from collectivism, which subjects the individual to the tyranny of the majority, and anarchy, which seeks to abolish the state, thus destroying the very organization necessary for liberty to flourish.

The word of Sin is Restriction. O man! refuse not thy wife, if she will! O lover, if thou wilt, depart! There is no bond that can unite the divided but love: all else is a curse. (I, 41)

Women's liberation. Sexual liberation. Free association.

So with thy all; thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay. (I, 42f.)

Human rights are a function of individual rights, which are a function of the liberty of the individual. The latter guarantees the

former. It is only necessary to guarantee human rights in a society that has none.

Thus ye have star & star, system & system; let not one know well the other! (I, 50)

Decentralization.

Be goodly therefore: dress ye all in fine apparel; eat rich foods and drink sweet wines and wines that foam! Also, take your fill and will of love as ye will, when, where and with whom ye will! But always unto me. (I, 51)

This shall regenerate the world (I, 53)

Ye shall gather goods and store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of the earth in splendour & pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy. (I, 61)

By releasing the untapped potential of the individual, universal prosperity will be attained as a function of innovation and the accumulation of wisdom (cf. R.B. Fuller). Sexual liberation is subject only to the realization of Cosmic Consciousness.

We are not for the poor and sad: the lords of the earth are our kinsfolk. (II, 18)

It is a lie, this folly against self. (II, 22)

Anti-altruism. Also anti-Buddhist (or so it seems, but the Buddha did not reject the kinetic self or mind stream [= Hadit], only the static atman of the *Upanishads*).

Beware lest any force another, King against King! Love one another with burning hearts; on the low men trample in the fierce lust of your pride, in the day of your wrath. Ye are against the people, O my chosen! (II, 24f.)

I am unique & conqueror. I am not of the slaves that perish. (II, 49)

Yea! deem not of change: ye shall be as ye are, & not other. Therefore the kings of the earth shall be Kings for ever: the slaves shall serve. There is none that shall be cast down or lifted up: all is ever as it was. (II, 58)

But the keen and the proud, the royal and the lofty; ye are brothers! As brothers fight ye! There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt. (III, 58f.)

Each individual, perfect in themselves, will be able to be exactly as they are, neither more nor less, in a system of perfect liberty. Altruism and self-sacrifice are self-negating. They restrict the individual and only perpetuate the very suffering they purport to alleviate. Freedom of association and uncoerced cooperation of individuals supersede totalitarian mobocracy and statism, whether communist or capitalist.

The Book of the Law as a Prophetic Text

"This shall regenerate the world, the little world my sister, my heart & my tongue, unto whom I send this kiss." (Liber CCXX, I, 53)

"Thou seest yon petal of amaranth, blown by the wind from the low sweet brows of Hathor? (The Magister saw it and rejoiced in the beauty of it.) Listen! (From a certain world came an infinite wail.) That falling petal seemed to the little ones a wave to engulf their continent. So they will reproach thy servant, saying: Who hath set thee to save us? He will be sore distressed. All they understand not that thou and I are fashioning a boat of mother-of-pearl. We will sail down the river of Amrit even to the yew-groves of Yama, where we may rejoice exceedingly." (Liber LXV, I, 34–39)

"This also is compassion: an end to the sickness of earth. A rooting-out of the weeds: a watering of the flowers." (Liber XC, 26)

Bracketing the question of advocacy, and simply taking the Book literally, no one can deny the remarkable prescience of AIWAZ in the *Book of the Law*. Written in 1904, the *Book of the Law* relays a set of prophetic pronouncements that presage the tenor, spirit, and actual events of the 20th and 21st centuries with remarkable precision and vigour. According to AIWAZ, the old order of *Judenchristlich* is moribund because it has ignored the earth: "Now is the time to destroy those who destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18). To quote Yeats, "The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate

intensity.”¹²⁴ Industrialization and mobocracy are destroying humanity.

As the ancient Greeks clearly understood, democracy is always followed by authoritarianism. Inferiority and maladjustment demand ever more and more concessions, while the old aristocratic civilizations are torn apart by increasingly extreme conflict, enabled by industrialization, culminating in World War I (1914–18). As a result, the world is being torn apart by escalating warfare and violence, culminating in the rise of Nazism, the ultimately proletarian ideology, which continues today, waiting for the opportunity to rise again (i.e., the Alt Right), and World War II in the 1940s. Human history is escalating toward a turning point, a point of decision, when organized human civilization will collapse and be superseded by a global catastrophe the like of which has not been seen for tens of thousands of years. The transition will be so terrible that human beings will long for death.

Climate change is extremely interesting in the context of the Age of Set, the god of desert heat. Billions will die in a short time (James Lovelock, the creator of Gaia theory, predicts this) because of this existential human crisis. Phoenix, Beijing, Miami, and London will become uninhabitable. Lovelock also predicts a war between Russia and China, which he says is “inevitable” (the twin warriors about the pillars of the world?). The phrase “pillars of the world” is Biblical: “for the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and he hath set the world upon them” (1 Sam. 2:8); “Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble” (Job 9:5f.). The pillars of the world support the earth, so AIWAZ’ implication appears to be that the earth will be fundamentally disrupted by a global war. The number of the verse, 71, is that of Saturn and death.

¹²⁴ “The Second Coming.”

Epidemics are likely to kill millions (originally written before Covid-19). By 2100 the earth's population will be culled from 11 billion (2100 projection) to as few as 500 million. Most of the survivors will live in Canada, Iceland, Scandinavia, and the Arctic Basin (bordered by Russia, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland) (about 100 million people live in that zone currently). North America and Europe will be fourteen degrees Fahrenheit (8° C.) hotter than they are now, with the real possibility of descent into a new dark age (predicted by Elon Musk).

The alternative includes desalination plants, synthetic food, nuclear energy, and geoengineering: "Some people will sit in their seats and do nothing, frozen in panic. Others will move. They'll see what's about to happen, and they'll take action, and they'll survive. They're the carriers of the civilization ahead."¹²⁵ *Perhaps these are the future Thelemites.*

The transition may be expedited by the use of WMDs that kill whole populations (nuclear, biological), followed by an interval of savagery, including the practice of cannibalism,¹²⁶ torture, and human sacrifice (cf. the Buddhist *sattantarakappa* or "age of swords," which may also be translated as "age of science").

AIWAZ implies that these events are imminent, and may be presaged by the burning down of Boleskine House in December 2015. Christian, Muslim, Indian, Buddhist, and Mongolian regions (i.e., Europe, the Middle East, India, China, Mongolia, Southeast Asia, and Japan) will be most affected. Because of these events, a new world power will emerge, based on ecological principles, as a reaction against the chaos then reigning. This power will form a world government and inaugurate a new world order that will replace the chaos of the old order. It will be noble (*arya*), prosperous, and esoteric.

¹²⁵ James Lovelock.

¹²⁶ See Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*.

Its leaders will establish a new epoch of human civilization. Membership in the new order will be voluntary and open to all, but only the truly noble will exercise authority. Thus, it will be a self-selecting government of the elect. According to the *Book of the Law*, the transition to the new order began in the 1980s.

The 1980s saw great socioeconomic changes and a worldwide move away from planned economies toward laissez-faire capitalism, as well as economic deconstruction in the developed world. The AIDs epidemic was recognized during the 1980s, resulting in more than 39 million deaths to date. Global warming became well known to the scientific community during the 1980s. The fall of the USSR made right-wing economic policy more powerful. The IMF and World Bank formed the nucleus of globalization as developing countries suffered from multiple debt crises. Major civil discontent and violence erupted in the Middle East, associated with the rise of Islamic terrorism. Population growth also exploded during the 1980s. Based on the *Book of the Law*, we can see the 1980s as a kairotic moment, in the shadow of which we still are.



Appendix I

The Secret Doctrine of H.P. Blavatsky

Talk I

Part I

The Macrocosm

The Master of the Temple

H.P. Blavatsky (1831–1891) – referred to affectionately as HPB – was born in Dnipropetrovsk (now Dnipro), in what is now Ukraine, but which was at that time part of the Russian Empire. Her family were aristocratic Russian Germans. As a child, she travelled extensively, and was largely self-educated, developing an interest in Western esotericism in her adolescence and, apparently, in science and modern philosophy too. By the 1870s, she was involved in Spiritualism, moving to the United States in 1873, and rising to public attention as a spirit medium, including public accusations of fraud that would dog her throughout her life.

HPB founded the Theosophical Society with Henry Steel Olcott, an American military officer, journalist, lawyer, and Buddhist, and William Quan Judge, an Irish-American mystic, esotericist, and occultist, as well as a commercial lawyer. She published *Isis Unveiled* in 1877, in which she outlined her theosophical worldview, with an emphasis on Hermeticism and Neoplatonism. In 1880, she and Olcott relocated to India and associated with the Arya Samaj, a monotheistic Hindu

Reform movement that believes in the absolute and infallible authority of the Vedas, which is still active today, as is the Theosophical Society, with thirty thousand members. In the same year, she and Olcott formally converted to Buddhism, the first Americans to do so.

Blavatsky had a remarkable influence, especially notable for a woman at a time when women were regarded as second-class citizens or even chattel. She influenced Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), William Butler Yeats (1865–1939), Aleister Crowley (1875–1947), Nicholas Roerich (1874–1947), Helena Roerich (1879–1955), Alice Bailey (1880–1949), the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (founded 1888), and Dion Fortune (1890–1946), among others.

The British administration opposed the spread of Theosophy in India, and Blavatsky, now in failing health, returned to Europe in 1885, establishing the Blavatsky Lodge in London, presided over by Blavatsky herself, where she taught a select group of students a special mode of breathing similar to “the Tathagata’s abode,” which the Buddha himself practised when he attained enlightenment. She published *The Secret Doctrine* in 1888 and *The Voice of the Silence* in 1889. Blavatsky even presented an autographed copy of the latter to Leo Tolstoy. *The Voice of the Silence* was extensively studied and commented upon by Aleister Crowley in 1919, in which he declared Blavatsky (along with William Blake) to be Masters of the Temple of the Great White Brotherhood. She died of influenza in 1891, at the age of 60.

The Perennial Philosophy (Gupta-Vidya)

... there was, during the youth of mankind, one language, one knowledge, one universal religion, when there were no churches, no creeds or sects, but when every man was a priest unto himself. (SD, I, 341)

Blavatsky claimed to have undertaken a series of world travels starting in 1849, visiting Europe, the Americas, and India. During her sojourn in India, she says she encountered several Tibetan bodhisattvas, spiritual adepts or masters¹²⁷ through whom she was educated in a universal spiritual science that she identified as the archaic spiritual

¹²⁷ She used the terms “masters of the ancient wisdom” (or “the Masters”), “elder brothers of the human race,” adepts, or mahatmas.

tradition that underlies and synthesizes all human knowledge, similar to claims made by Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Islam. Blavatsky denied, however, that she was teaching Tibetan Buddhism, although she certainly alludes to it in her writings. Rather, she declared that she was transmitting “the secret occult teachings of trans-Himalaya,” which she nevertheless identifies with pre-Buddhist Tibet (SD, I, 271).¹²⁸ Blavatsky’s “Secret Wisdom Religion” has been referred to as “the perennial philosophy” or the “*prisca theologia*,” a term first proposed by Marsilio Ficino in the fifteenth century, incorporating elements of Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, the Chaldean Oracles, and Rosicrucianism.

Agostino Steuco coined the term “perennial philosophy” in the 16th century. Blavatsky was an inventive and far-sighted innovator whose intuitive approach to identifying recurrent patterns of spiritual, philosophical, and even scientific thought anticipated Jung (1875–1961), Evans-Wentz (1878–1965), and others by many decades at a time when Asian spirituality was just beginning to be known and appreciated in the West. Blavatsky’s major premise is that the myths, legends, and stories of mankind are not meaningless or arbitrary, but carefully crafted allusions to metaphysical, astronomical, astrological, psychological, historical, and even physical facts, often obscured by the passage of time, other times deliberately to conceal the more profound or even dangerous truths from the (mis)understanding of the unworthy and profane crowd. Thus, she was a pioneer of the approach to the interpretation of mythology in which mythological accounts are presumed to have originated from real historical events, known as euhemerism. At the same time, she emphasized their interior, esoteric meaning and significance.

Blavatsky anticipated important new trends in science, including post-materialism, the geometrical character of existence, Einsteinian relativity, quantum physics,¹²⁹ atomic energy,¹³⁰ string theory,¹³¹ digital

¹²⁸ Blavatsky refers to Si-dzang (Xizang), i.e., Western Tibet, the location of Mt. Kailash and of Lake Manasarovar, both revered by Bon, Jainism, Hinduism, and Tibetan Buddhism. Blavatsky says that Emperor Yu, a semi-mythical sage-king of ancient China, is said to have obtained his knowledge from this region in the late third millennium BCE.

¹²⁹ “...the phenomena of our plane are the creation of the perceiving Ego – the modifications of its own subjectivity” (SD, I, 329).

physics, the theory of catastrophism, climate change, magnetic reversal, exoplanets, extraterrestrial life, as well as the New Age and counterculture movements, of which she is regarded as a pioneer and which continues today.

The Book of Dzyan

Despite enduring a reputation as a charlatan, Blavatsky has been publicly praised by D.T. Suzuki, renowned Japanese Buddhist scholar and Nobel prize nominee, who wrote that “Undoubtedly Madame Blavatsky had in some way been initiated into the deeper side of Mahayana teaching and then gave out what she deemed wise to the Western world” (*Eastern Buddhist*, Old Series, 5:377). He commented: “Here is the real Mahayana Buddhism” (*The Middle Way*, August 1965, p. 90). The Dalai Lama wrote a preface to the centennial edition of *The Secret Doctrine*. Even Dr. Alex Berzin has declared that she had extrasensory powers and acknowledged that she studied Tibetan Buddhism with Indian masters. Mahatma Gandhi visited the Blavatsky Lodge. The American inventor Thomas Edison and the Irish poet William Butler Yeats were also members of the TS.

The Secret Doctrine is written as a 1,521 page commentary on a fifteen-page esoteric text called “The Book of Dzyan.” Blavatsky claimed that she saw this text, which was originally written in a language called “Senzar.” However, Blavatsky herself hinted at its true nature when she remarked that the ethnicity of the authors, language, source, and agency are unknown to science. However, it is useful to recall the words of Aleister Crowley with regard to communications of this type: “You will readily understand that the genuineness of the claim matters no whit, such literature being judged by itself, not by its

¹³⁰ “And is it this Satanic Force that our generations were to be allowed to add to their stock of Anarchist’s baby-toys, known as melenite, dynamite clock-works, ‘flower baskets,’ and such other innocent names? Is it this destructive agency, which, once in the hands of some modern Attila, e.g., a blood-thirsty anarchist, would reduce Europe in a few days to its primitive chaotic state with no man left alive to tell the tale – is this force to become the common property of all men alike?” (SD, I, 563).

¹³¹ “Atoms are called ‘Vibrations’ in Occultism” (SD, I, 633). Blavatsky’s subsequent description anticipates the psychedelic revolution of the 1960s (SD, I, 633f.).

reputed sources” (*Liber Causae*). It is certainly written to a much higher standard than most channelled texts, then or now.

Blavatsky claimed that the book records the esoteric or secret teachings of the Tibetan Tantric *gyü de* (*rGyud-sde*), the Tantra series of the Mahayoga textual tradition.¹³² Mahayoga is the first of the three Inner Yogas of the original Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, a.k.a. as the generation or development stage of Tantra, in which the universe is visualized as the manifestation of Buddhist “deities,” characterized by the “two-truths doctrine” that distinguishes between conventional (exoteric) and ultimate (esoteric) truth. The main practice is visualizing oneself as a “deity” and their consort, similar to the practice called the “Assumption of God Forms” in the Western esoteric tradition. By this means, all appearances are purified, eliminating especially anger and aggression. Thus, the world is realized as a pure and sacred land, representing a higher stage of realization than that which views the world as impure and defiled (the conventional early Buddhist view that is, however, self-evidently transcended in enlightenment). Thus, in a remarkable anticipation of post-modernism, reality itself is realized as a psychic construct.

Blavatsky describes Senzar as “the secret sacerdotal language or the ‘Mystery-Speech’ of the initiated adepts, all over the world.” In *Isis Unveiled*, she identifies it with ancient Sanskrit. Elsewhere she says that the *Book of Dzyan* was translated into Chinese, Tibetan, and Sanskrit. She claimed that the *Book of Dzyan* was originally composed by a lost civilization that she calls “Atlantis,” inhabited by an earlier and superior group of human beings, about a million years ago, during the time of *Homo erectus*, according to orthodox archaeology. Interestingly, *H. erectus* was the first human ancestor to spread throughout the Old World, with a humanlike gait and body proportions, flat face, prominent nose, and sparse body hair.

H. erectus was socially cooperative, used stone tools, and was the first human ancestor to use fire. They cared for the sick and injured and may have been seafaring. They ranged in height from 5 to 6 feet

¹³² Alex Berzin points out that the first section of the *Kangyur*, the Tibetan canon is also called the *rgyud-sde*, and he confirms that the Kalachakra influenced Blavatsky.

and weighed from 88 to 150 pounds, and probably communicated using an unknown proto-language. However, it seems unlikely that this is what Blavatsky is referring to when she refers to the “Atlanteans.” Blavatsky’s theory of different human groups was very progressive for the time, recognizing the great antiquity of human beings at a time when the orthodox religious view was that the world was less than six thousand years old, including cultural and religious beliefs and practices, as well as the coexistence of multiple human species or subspecies, of which we are the sole surviving remnant.

She recognized the scale of astronomical time, the baffling complexity of the universe, multiple dimensions of reality, multiple worlds including living and sentient beings throughout the multiverse¹³³ at all levels of spiritual development (cf. Giordano Bruno), continental drift, and lost civilizations and languages, of which several have been discovered since,¹³⁴ as well as the fundamental veracity of imaginative, intuitive, and symbolic modes of thought and communication and the limitations of dogmatic scientism.

At least seventeen lineages of Homo have been identified. Blavatsky’s theory is not dissimilar from the Indian and Buddhist cosmology, which identifies four distinct human types, occupying southern, eastern, western, and northern “continents,” varying greatly in height, longevity, and civilization. Blavatsky’s notion of “Atlantis” suggests the inhabitants of Uttarakuru, the square-shaped northern “continent,” who live in aerial cities; are extraordinarily prosperous; do not need to work, as everything is produced for them, with everything being held in common (no private property); and are long-lived, which we find in the Pali Canon. The idea that a much more technically advanced hominid civilization co-exists with human beings on, or in, the earth, has also been proposed in the context of the UFO phenomenon, notably by Dr. Jacques Vallée, a computer scientist and researcher whose works on the UFO phenomenon are widely regarded

¹³³ “The Eternity of the Universe in toto as a boundless plane; periodically ‘the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing’” (SD, I, 16). Blavatsky appears to be alluding to brane cosmology, in which multiple universes move about on two-dimensional branes, developed in the 1980s and after.

¹³⁴ E.g., Indus Valley civilization, Anghor Watt, the Nag Hammadi library, etc.

as the gold standard of UFO research. This raises the possibility that “Senzar” might be an alien language not associated with any human language. This is supported by the fact that UFO experiencers frequently report spiritual experiences and a wide variety of quasi-theosophical teachings, as well as the development of creative and psychic abilities.¹³⁵

The word “Dzyan” (*Dzan*) does not appear to be Tibetan. However, Blavatsky’s transcriptions of Asian words are frequently idiosyncratic. However, ‘*Dzin*’ (འཇིན་) is a Tibetan word that has several related meanings, including ‘thought consciousness, conception of self, conception of true existence/establishment, mode of apprehension of the ascertaining consciousness absorbed in suchness,’ etc. The teachings of the *Book of Dzyan* have been related to the Dzogchen or Atiyoga teachings, which are regarded as the highest spiritual teachings in the Buddhist Nyingma hierarchy. Blavatsky herself relates *Dzyan*, *Dzan*, *Djan*, *Dan* to Ch’an, which she describes as “a general term for the esoteric schools” and to “janna” (*jhana*), defined as “to reform oneself by meditation and knowledge.”¹³⁶

Ch’an of course refers to the Chinese tradition of Buddhist meditation (Jap. Zen), to which Dzogchen has been compared. *Jhana* (Skt. *dhyana*) refers to training the mind by meditation by withdrawing the mind from sense impressions leading to a state of perfect equanimity and awareness, which Blavatsky describes as “a second inner birth.”

The Book of Dzyan is divided into nineteen “stanzas.” The first seven stanzas, divided into fifty-three numbered verses, are entitled “Cosmic Evolution.” These constitute the basis of Volume I of *The Secret Doctrine*, the subtitle of which is “Cosmogogenesis.” The next twelve stanzas, divided into 49 (7 × 7) verses, is entitled “Anthropogenesis.” These constitute Volume II of *The Secret Doctrine*, the subtitle of which

¹³⁵ Cf.: “‘Divine origin’ does not mean here a revelation from an anthropomorphic god on a mount amidst thunder and lightning; but, as we understand it, a language and a system of science imparted to the early mankind by a more advanced mankind, so much higher as to be divine in the sight of that infant humanity. By a ‘mankind,’ in short, from other spheres” (SD, I, 309).

¹³⁶ Cf. *jnana*, gnosis.

is the same. Thus, there are nineteen stanzas comprising 102 verses in all.

The subject matter of *The Secret Doctrine* is divided into two large topics: the origin or development of the cosmos or universe regarded as a harmonious, orderly system, and the origin or development of human beings.

In order to prepare this talk and to boil Blavatsky's extensive and rather discursive work into something manageable I have undertaken a word frequency analysis based on the 1925 index, in which I identified the most frequently recurring concepts. I will be exploring the former two main categories in the context of these concepts.

In this exposition we will follow the descent of Spirit into Matter. Paradoxically, the descent or devolution of Spirit is also the ascent or evolution of Matter, through a process of transformation, in which a great Arcanum is concealed (see SD, I, 417). Spirit, moreover, is Consciousness (but not conscious).¹³⁷ Matter is unconsciousness (but not unconscious). Consciousness as commonly understood, i.e., mental phenomena, is the synthesis of Spirit and Matter, which depend on each other for their mutual self-realization.

Cosmogogenesis (Cosmology, Ontology, Metaphysics)

Parabrahm (The Void)

Parabrahm(am), the Supreme Brahman, or "secondless reality," is Blavatsky's highest cosmic conception, beyond all descriptions and conceptualizations. It is one with *Mulaprakriti* (unmanifested primordial matter), the pre-cosmic root substance, the veil of *Parabrahm*, the noumenon, the root of nature, the essence of primordial homogeneous matter, and an invisible Presence that is the root of all. Spirit and matter are one. It is formless, all-pervasive, omnipresent, and transcendent. *Parabrahm* is also referred to as the Supreme All, the

¹³⁷ Thus, perhaps paradoxically, the original and originating state of Consciousness is Ignorance. Logically, the fundamental state of reality must be a state of "no-information," nothingness or void, which is nevertheless fecund.

Fire in the Mountain

Absolute, unconditioned reality, the Unknowable, the substance principle, and the unspeakable mystery.

It is trans-dual, non-dual, dual, and multiplex altogether (cf. the Buddhist *tetralemma*). Blavatsky says it is smaller than the smallest atom, anticipating the quantum. It is a universal indivisible substance, the One Ever Changeless, the All-Cause, the Great Extreme, and the One Life. It is self-identical and identical with the self, yet transcendent; its direct knowledge, realization, or gnosis is enlightenment itself. Because it is formless, it appears in all forms, yet does not appear in them.

It is love, truth, knowledge; being, consciousness, bliss. It is the Kabalistic idea of the *Ain-Soph*, the Infinite. It is One and it is Many. Known for an instant, it is known forever; yet it is not known. Who realizes this is enlightened.

Knowing this is the only enlightenment; there is no other enlightenment. Knowing this is timelessness; there is no other timelessness. All enlightenments are one enlightenment, expressed in different language. Yet some languages are more expressive than others just as some poets are truer than others. It is the fourth state of consciousness, not awake, not dreaming, and not asleep. Another term for it is the *bardo*, the 'intermediate state.' Others call it the void or plenum.

Akasa (Chaos)

Akasa is the radiation of *Mulaprakriti*, a universal force and a form of primeval matter or primordial ether or inter-etheric force that pervades all things, is objectively eternal, synthesizes the forces of nature, and is related to the Astral Light. It is equivalent to Chaos or vacuity, the primal void that is the Source of All.

Mahat (Mind)

Mahat, the universal intelligence, the universal Divine Mind. It is the pure divine principle that emanates the Logos.

Fire in the Mountain

Logos (Speech)

The Logos is the First Cause, the one ray or unknown light, the great unseen, identified with the Gnostic demiurge, the collective “creator” of the universe, a.k.a. the creative deity or Second God. Blavatsky identifies the Logos with the supreme Buddha (Adi Buddha), which reflects universal mind like a mirror. It is Wisdom, but is also identified with Satan and the demiurge.

The War in Heaven (The Churning)

The War in Heaven refers to a “churning” that occurred before the earth’s formation, and is related to the fall of the oldest and highest Angels (devas) into “hell,” i.e., matter, a third of the divine denizens, as a result of the development of “Spirit volition” in its devolution from “Divine desire.” Blavatsky writes, “The Gods became no-Gods, the Sura – A-sura, ... i.e., gods became fiends – SATAN, when read literally” (SD, II, 237). The War in Heaven is the result of a conflict pertaining to Soma, symbolized by the Moon, which Blavatsky clearly and percipiently recognizes as “the sacred juice of that name, giving mystic visions and trance revelations, the result of which union is Budha (Wisdom), Mercury, Hermes, etc., etc.; that science in short which to this day is proclaimed by the Brihaspatis of Theology as devilish and Satanic” (SD, I, 45); “Hence the REBELS are our saviours” (SD, II, 103). Blavatsky says that the Fall of the Angels and the War in Heaven are repeated on every plane as the war between Spirit and Matter: “This war will last till the inner and divine man adjusts his outer terrestrial self to his own spiritual nature. Until then the dark and fierce passions of the former will be at eternal feud with his master, the Divine Man. However, the animal will be tamed one day, because its nature will be changed, and harmony will reign once more between the two as before the ‘Fall’” (SD, II, 268).

Egg of Brahma (Time)

The Egg of Brahma is the Second Logos, the generative Light of the Logos, the architect of the universe, and the emanation of Time. The Egg has a dual form, with four bodies, against which the *asuras* (‘anti-gods’) rebel.

Fire in the Mountain

Fohat (Energy)

According to my Sanskrit-English dictionary, *Fohat* is a Tibetan word or concept. It is the force of differentiation and life, the animating principle or cosmic energy or impulse that energizes and guides intelligence, identified with the potential breath or *prana*. It “hardens” the atoms, hisses as it glides (snake-like), impresses mind on matter, and has many abodes.

Manvantara (Cyclicity)

Manvantara is a Sanskrit term meaning ‘reign, period, age, or lifespan of a Manu.’¹³⁸ In orthodox Hinduism each *manvantara* is 306,720,000 years long and repeats 71 *yuga* cycles or dharma ages. There are 124 *manvantaras* per *kalpa*, or day of Brahma, at the end of each of which the earth is submerged under water. Interestingly, the earth was in fact a water world 3.2 billion years ago.¹³⁹ Blavatsky’s cosmic conception, in common with other Asian theosophies, is cyclical, alternating between passive and active states, the so-called Days and Nights of Brahma, or exhalations and inhalations of *prana*, imitating the seasonal rise and fall in declination of the Sun.

The *Manvantara* is the period of evolution; the *pralaya* (or *mahapralaya*), universal destruction. During the period of the *Manvantara* the phenomenal world appears, consisting of millions of worlds and living beings at all stages of spiritual development, both physical and non-physical. The theory of cycles within cycles, ad infinitum is a brilliant anticipation of process philosophy, which only achieved its full flowering in the 19th and 20th centuries (e.g., Whitehead’s *Process and Reality*).

¹³⁸ Originally, a “*manu*” referred to the primordial archetypal man, and then came to refer to fourteen mystical rulers of the earth, or mystical dynasties.

¹³⁹ Also, the world was destroyed by fire with the extinction of the dinosaurs sixty-five million years ago. A lesser destruction by fire may have occurred about 70,000 to 75,000 years ago, when human beings nearly died off because of the Youngest Toba super-volcanic eruption.

Pralaya (Potentiality)

The *pralaya* is the night of Brahma, characterized by passivity of being, the death of the cosmos, and periodic conflagrations of the world. *Pralayas* are both partial and universal. The forgoing structure clearly shows the devolution of Spirit through ten distinct ontological categories, distinct dimensions of Spirit in descending order. Cyclicity, as the kinetic principle, must enjoy some sort of primacy else there would be only changeless Potentiality or Emptiness. Reality is essentially dynamic, not static. These are the primary dharmas of Blavatsky's Theosophy.

Part II

The Microcosm

We began this talk with the title of the first volume of Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine: COSMOGENESIS OR COSMIC EVOLUTION, beginning with *Parabrahm*, the highest universal Principle, ultimate Reality, which we identified with emptiness. This is the great macrocosm, the Infinite principle. We conclude the talk with *Parabrahm* in its complementary meaning, identified by Blavatsky with the microcosm, the Infinitesimal principle. Thus, Blavatsky writes that "Anu, which means in Sanskrit 'atom,' aniyamsam aniyasam (smallest of the small), is a name of Parabrahm in the Vedantic philosophy; Parabrahm being described as smaller than the smallest atom, and greater than the greatest sphere or universe: 'Anagraniyam and Mahtorvavat'" (SD, I, 357). As it is written in the Emerald Tablet, "That which is above is from that which is below, and that which is below is from that which is above, working the miracles of one [thing]. As all things were from One."¹⁴⁰

Similarly, she writes that "In contradistinction to the manifested universe of matter, the term Mulaprakriti (from Mula, 'the root,' and prakriti, 'nature'), or the unmanifested primordial matter – called by

¹⁴⁰ كانت كما واحد من ال عجاب عمل الأع لى من والأ سد فل الأ سد فل من الأع لى إن See also SD, I, 177.

Western Alchemists Adam's Earth – is applied by the Vedantins to Parabrahmam.” In addition “From its (the Logos’) objective Standpoint, Parabrahmam appears to it as Mulaprakriti ... Parabrahmam is an unconditioned absolute reality, and Mulaprakriti is a sort of veil thrown over it” (SD, I, 10). Yet Parabrahm includes Mulaprakriti, as the Infinite includes the finite. These are of course more or less arbitrary symbols, as Laozi indicates and Blavatsky herself affirms. A thousand others, all equally satisfactory and unsatisfactory, depending on the preference of the individual, might equally well replace them. Thus, Blavatsky's highly associative method is not obscurantism, but illumination, just as Senzar, the secret language of the Adepts, is actually non-linguistic, but symbolic.

Yoga begins with introspection (*pratyahara*), and the Buddha taught his followers a method of meditation on the body, centred on an infinitesimal point in the center of the heart and radiating outwards in all six directions to Infinity. Similarly, Blavatsky writes: “Close your eyes, and from your own consciousness of perception try and think outward to the extremest limits in every direction. You will find that equal lines or rays of perception extend out evenly in all directions, so that the utmost effort of perception will terminate in the vault of a sphere. The limitation of this sphere will, of necessity, be a great Circle, and the direct rays of thought in any and every direction must be right line radii of the circle. This, then, must be, humanly speaking, the extremest all-embracing conception of the Ain-Soph manifest, which formulates itself as a geometrical figure, viz., of a circle, with its elements of curved circumference and right line diameter divided into radii. Hence a geometrical shape is the first recognizable means of connection between the Ain-Soph and the intelligence of man” (SD, I, 429).

Similarly, digital physics proposes that everything, reality itself, is binary, and may be reduced to the mathematical-geometrical simplicity of zeros and ones. There is no need for any “substance.” Reality is information and associative, not sequential, as per Jacques Vallée. Matter or “materiality” itself is nothing more than a category of perception (cf. SD, I, 542); there are realities that are material, there are realities that are immaterial, and there are realities that are both (Jung's “psychoid”).

Talk II

Last time, to recap, we discussed H.P. Blavatsky as a Master of the Temple, including the Perennial Philosophy and the *Book of Dzyan*, starting with Cosmogenesis, or Cosmic Evolution, especially her concepts of the *Parabrahm*, secondless reality; *Akasha*, the radiation of *Mulaprakriti*; *Mahat*, universal intelligence; the Logos, the first cause; the War in Heaven; the Egg of Brahma, Infinite Space (*Ain-Soph*); *Fohat*, the animating principle; the *Manvantara*, or *Manu*; and the Microcosm. Today we will discuss Anthropogenesis, including the Divine Monad; Maya, the illusion of ignorance; Karma; the *Dhyani-Chohans*; *Manas*, the human soul; the *Elohim*; and “Jehovah.” In subsequent talks, I will be discussing Blavatsky’s Theory of the Seven Ages of Man, or “man-epochs” as Blavatsky also termed it, and Kabala, thus concluding my series of talks based on the most frequently recurring concepts in Blavatsky’s *Secret Doctrine*, based on the *Stanzas of Dzyan*.

Anthropogenesis (Anthropology)

The Divine Monad (or Monadic Essence)

The Monad, the manifested One, the Sun of the Higher Self, “One, Universal, Boundless, and Impartite” (SD, I, 177), simple and uncompounded, described as a material point without extension, “an indestructible star of divine light and fire” (SD, I, 174), is the infinitesimal, indivisible, immortal, impersonal, and eternal principle of all things, emanated from the Universal Spirit, “a drop out of the shoreless Ocean beyond” (SD, II, 186), into which it is absorbed at the end of each universal cycle. It is two in one, i.e., trans-dual and dual. The Monad, vivified and differentiated by its spiritual essence, “within the plane of primeval differentiation” (SD, II, 186), emerges from the ONE at the reawakening of the universe. It is the unitary principle of every world, from the largest solar system to the smallest atom. Blavatsky herself compares the Monad to the monad of the philosopher Leibnitz, with the potentiality of self-consciousness or reflexivity inherent within it, a universe in itself and for itself, “an atom and an angel.”

Blavatsky identifies the monads with the ultimate atoms (or “atom-Souls”)¹⁴¹ of the manifest universe, which is reflected in each of its monads. According to Blavatsky, the “two in one” Monad is the union of Spirit and the latent soul, unconditioned and manifested, united by *Fohat*, the All-Force, in its aspect of divine love. It is the *Jiva* (lit. ‘that which breathes’), including any living being or entity imbued with life force, including man. It first appears in the lowest form of matter, the mineral. It then passes through mineral, vegetable, animal forms, and humanity, with the possibility of enlightenment. However, in itself it is unconscious (the primary state of ignorance [*avidya*] or no-information), a ray or breath of the Absolute, pure process.

The monad requires a spiritual model, prototype, or archetype to shape itself into, and an intelligent consciousness to guide its evolution and progress, including, interestingly, the “survival of the fittest” (SD, I, 277; cf. *ibid*, 202f.). As the unconscious but purely impulsive monad descends into matter, and ascends through matter, so matter itself is enlivened and ascends to Spirit, evolving and growing ever more perfect. The union of Spirit and Matter produces the perfected man (see SD, I, 247), represented by the Central (Seventh) Point of the Hexagram, the Star composed of descending and ascending Triangles. Each Monad is thus an individual Being, having its own unique relationship to the Totality. Prior to Incarnation as a human being, however, dwelling in silence, solitude, and darkness, the monad is pure potential, unconscious, without personality or ego, a mere “spark.”

Maya

Maya, the Mother-Source, is the illusion of ignorance of every finite thing, which appears as organization, thus uniting the Hindu and the Buddhist views, ontological and epistemological respectively. Maya is temporary, changeable, ephemeral, and unreal. Maya is binary or dual(istic), manifesting Good and Evil through Space and Time. Represented as a web or a net, Maya enters into all finite things, since everything is relative, not absolute. The appearance of the noumenon depends on the perception of the observer, like the shadows of Plato’s cave.

¹⁴¹ See SD, I, 567ff. Cf. *op. cit.*, 623.

Everything is impermanent except the Absolute. Yet the participants in the illusory universe, themselves equally illusory, “twinkling and dancing on the waves of Maya” (SD, I, 237), experience themselves and the world as real, which of course it is in a certain sense, in that it is the Absolute experiencing itself in or as illusion. As we increase in knowledge and power, so our understanding of reality expands, but we also realize the illusoriness of the previous stages. With each step in our progress, we think we understand reality, just as we now experience invisible radio, TV, and microwaves as “reality.” When we realize the absolute, ultimate reality, then we realize that everything else is in fact Maya.

Karma

The word “karma” means ‘action’ or ‘cause,’ and refers to the law of ethical causation, which explains the origin of evil and our conceptions of “divine immutable Justice,” Nemesis, or Fate. It is “inextricably interwoven” with the doctrine of reincarnation, since every cause must have its effect, and every effect its cause, either in this life or in the next, in this world or the next. As Blavatsky says, “Karmic law adjusts the effects; which adjustment is not an act, but universal harmony, tending ever to resume its original position, like a bough, which bent down too forcibly, rebound with corresponding vigour”; “Karma is an Absolute and Eternal law in the World of manifestation” (SD, II, 305; see also SD, I, 569). A.k.a. as the “Law of Retribution,” Karma is based on the theory of “the stream of concatenated law” (SD, I, 39), which expresses itself dualistically, producing merit and demerit, good and bad karma, and ultimately one’s destiny, based on the quality of one’s thoughts, words, and deeds, manifested in, through, and by means of the Four Elements: Fire, Air, Water, and Earth.

The essence of good karma is altruism. Thus, the Law of Karma produces both evolutionary and devolutionary processes depending on the quality; there are individual, national (SD, I, 675), and genetic karmas. According to Blavatsky, every thought and act of man in the phenomenal universe is recorded in the Astral Light (or Ether), a.k.a. the Book of Life (cf. the Buddhist notion of a ‘storehouse consciousness,’ *alayavijnana*), and produces its particular result: “There is no chance in nature, wherein everything is mathematically co-ordinate and mutually related in its units” (SD, I, 653). Put another

way, each particle of matter registers all that has happened – a fantastic thought in the 19th century, not so fantastic today, in the light of Bell's Theorem, etc. Blavatsky relates the Book of Life to a seventh sense, which preserves the spiritual fruit and memory of Karma, the sixth sense being familiar to us as mind, the active form of which is Intention (cf. SD, I, 124, "Thought is matter," etc.).

Dhyani-Chohans

Blavatsky defines the *dhyani-chohans*, "the never-resting Breaths," as a generic term for all devas, angels, archangels, or celestial beings, from Sanskrit *dhyani* 'one who meditates.' We may say that they are higher dimensional beings. *Chohan* may derive from Tibetan *cho-khan* 'dharma lord,' but Blavatsky says it means, "master," "lord," or "chief" (cf. "Secret Chief"). Thus, a *dhyani-chohan* is one who has mastered meditation, corresponding to the devas of the various planes and classifications in Buddhism. These are the agents of karmic and cosmic laws, and impress on matter the ideas found in the cosmic ideation, and stand in the same relationship to universal mind as builders do to an architect.

Blavatsky refers to different sorts of *Dhyani-Chohans*, including the Primordial Seven, *Lipikas*, *Manasaputras*, *Kumaras*, *Manus*, etc. Blavatsky's notion of a nearly endless and extensive series of hierarchies of sentient beings throughout the universe with its galaxies and planets is similar to Gnosticism, as well as the UFO lore, especially if the latter are conceptualized as trans-dimensional entities (e.g., Jacques Vallée; cf. Giordano Bruno, for which "heresy" he was burned at the stake by the Roman Church in the year 1600; see also SD, I, 133, 164). As in Buddhism, they have either been human beings or may be born as human beings in the future, and vary greatly in consciousness and intelligence, though all are finite and imperfect. According to Blavatsky, they are devoid of human individuality, personality, and emotionality. Their basic mental state is nirvana, but, unlike mainstream Buddhism, they continue to interact with the universe, but the highest nirvana is only reached during a period of non-manifestation (*pralaya*).

Elohim

Elohim is properly a plural noun, literally ‘children of El,’ or the Sun, according to the original etymology, consisting of a male plural termination grafted onto a female root. Blavatsky says that the word refers to the Messengers of the Jews, vehicles for the manifestation of divine universal thought and will: “They are the Intelligent Forces that give to and enact in Nature her ‘laws,’ while themselves acting according to laws imposed upon them in a similar manner by still higher Powers” (SD, I, 38). They correspond to the *Dhyan-Chohans*, previously discussed. They antedate Jehovah, with which they were subsequently identified. They are the bisexual or androgynous “architects,” symbolized by the Demiurge, who fashion Cosmos out of Chaos and created humanity.

Elohim is a Hebrew formula which is spelled ALHYM, and conceals within it a numerical formula, i.e., 1 3 5 1 4, which in turn conceals the value of pi, the ratio of the diameter of a circle to its circumference, the symbol of Infinity, in reverse, starting with L – 3.1415 (SD, I, 114). This is of course the Kabala of letters and numbers, known as gematria. They are also identified with the *Sephiroth* of the Kabalistic Tree of Life. Satan, the Serpent who liberated man from the thralldom of Eden in Hebraic/Sumerian mythology, is one such. We will discuss Satan in Talk IV.

Manas

Manas, or reflexive mind-consciousness, is the human soul, the corollary of *Mahat*, universal or cosmic intelligence, along with Spirit and Body. Dormant in primitive man, *manas* manifests through the dual personality in which the lower *manas* is symbolized by the moon, the false and transitory personality or animal-human soul, and the upper by the sun, the real immortal Ego. The higher aspect is attracted to *Buddhi*, the divine or spiritual soul and the root of intelligence, the lower (imprisoned, as it were) to the selfish and sensual animal soul, the terrestrial and animal desires and passions. It is the self-conscious, reasoning *manas* or Ego that distinguishes man from the animals, and is still not fully developed. Similarly, primeval man was mindless, lacking a middle or intermediate principle or *manas* to link the spiritual man and the physical brain.

Manas is symbolically associated with the number 5, referred to as a fifth state of matter, or protyle; the figure of the pentagram or pentagon; and the Serpent of Eternity and All Knowledge or Gnosis. According to Blavatsky, it corresponds to the Egyptian Seb (Geb?), the ancestral soul, “the bright immortal thread of the higher Ego, to which clings the Spiritual aroma of all the lives or births” (SD, II, 632). It is the third of the divine trinity of *Atma*, pure universal spirit or self; *Buddhi*, the spiritual soul; and *Manas*, the “plastic mediator,” or Body, symbolized as three fires, electric, solar, and the creative spark or germ, which together constitute the unity of the Monad – three in one, and one in three.

Jehovah

Jehovah is generally understood as the proper name of the god of the Jews. The English spelling, which goes back to the 16th century, is supposed to reproduce Yod He Waw He, the pronunciation of the unutterable name of God, called the Tetragrammaton, and appears in some English translations of the Bible. However, the contemporary consensus of scholars is that the true pronunciation – if an unpronounceable name can be said to have a pronunciation – was Yahweh.

However, when one turns to Blavatsky her thinking about Jehovah is more akin to Gnosticism; she declares that Jehovah is “no more than the personified secondary powers which have worked out the visible universe” (SD, I, 4). Her anti-Christian Buddhism emerges when she derides “male Jehovah” as “the anthropomorphic God of the Christians ... roaring amid thunder and lightning,” which she contrasts negatively with any notion of a supreme personal Creator God. Blavatsky declares that this god is only the god of the material universe, which emerges at the beginning of each universal manifestation – one of the *Elohim* in fact – that is technically inferior and secondary to the authentic divine *Parabrahm* or *Ain-Soph*, discussed in the previous talk. The letters of the Tetragrammaton represent the Four Elements and the union of the male (Yod) and female (He), i.e., the Father-Mother, principles, which results in the bisexual or androgynous Son (Waw), i.e., the procreative Process. This concept is akin to the Gnostic Demiurge or *Demiurgos*, a Second God that is inferior to the true original and originating Creator God, which is impersonal and profound.

Interestingly, in Tibetan Buddhism we find the conjunction of the male and female principles in the union of a bodhisattva and his Shakti, and in the Father-Mother Tantra. Space and time unite to form matter, the third principle, the interaction of which creates infinite proliferation, i.e., Maya, also discussed in the first talk. Symbolically, Jehovah refers to Saturn, the outermost planet, the planet of matter, restriction, and time but also that which intermediates between the solar system and the universal Space Beyond. Saturn is also associated with procreation, stating that “the God with which the Christians have burdened themselves was no better than the lunar symbol of their productive or generative faculty in nature” (SD, I, 391). Blavatsky associates Jehovah with the Moon, the satellite of the Earth, Matter. According to some scholars, the Allah of the Muslims derives from the worship of the Moon, which appears as the Crescent in the symbol of Islam.

Talk III

The Seven Ages of Man

Note: All chronologies in this essay follow generally accepted science, except where specifically noted otherwise.

Part I

In our previous talks, we have outlined a cosmological system in which universes emerge out of a state of pure potentiality, or *pralaya*, referred to as “a night of Brahma”; they expand or evolve; contract or devolve; and then return to the original potential state, over the course of thousands of millions of years. Blavatsky, following Indian tradition, says that an “age of Brahma,” a.k.a. a *mahakalpa*, is 311 trillion, 40 billion human years.¹⁴² This theory may be compared with the current state of scientific knowledge, which holds that our universe emerged out of a “big bang” about 14 billion years ago.¹⁴³ According to the classical theory, the expansion of the universe will culminate in a

¹⁴² 311,040,000,000,000 years. In Blavatsky’s time, this would be denominated 311.04 billion years (1 billion = 1 million million). However, today it would be called 311,040 billion (1 billion = 1 thousand million).

¹⁴³ Blavatsky, basing herself on Hinduism, says that the “cosmic evolution” of the solar system began 1.956 billion years ago, compared to the current scientific reckoning of 4.571 billion years for the solar system.

contraction, called the “Big Crunch,” in about 100 billion years, so that the total age of the universe is about 200 billion years, followed by a new “Big Bang,” in an eternally recurring series. There are other scientific theories too, none of which is definitively established, which I will not go into here.¹⁴⁴

I only mention this theory for purposes of comparison with the classical Indian theory, accepted by Blavatsky. The Big Bang theory was not generally accepted until 1964, once again showing Blavatsky’s far-sightedness. It is remarkable how ancient Indian and Mayan time cycles approximate to astronomical time cycles, compared to the grossly naïve time cycles of the Biblical tradition, in which the universe was created by God in 3760 BCE. Even by orthodox standards, *Homo* was old by this time.

The Buddhist view of cosmological and human historical development is summarized in the Great Discourse on the Lineage (*Mahapadana Sutta*, DN 14), the Great Discourse on Origination (*Mahanidana Sutta*, DN 15), a King’s Renunciation (*Mahasudassana Sutta*, DN 17), the Charlatan (*Patika Sutta*, DN 24), the Lion’s Roar on the Turning of the Wheel (*Cakkavatti-Sihanada Sutta*, DN 26), and On Knowledge of Beginnings (*Agganna Sutta*, DN 27), which I will summarize as follows.

Buddhas have appeared throughout vast ages of time, including Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha, who was the fourth to appear in our current historical epoch,¹⁴⁵ in which life is short, brutish, and quick. The implication is that the dharma that we know, which the Buddha hesitated to teach, due to the limitations of historical human beings, is a mere shadow of the dharma of the past, as a forest – according to the famous metaphor of the Buddha himself – exceeds a

¹⁴⁴ Including the “big freeze/heat death,” “big rip,” “big bounce,” and “big slurp” (false vacuum) theories.

¹⁴⁵ The early Buddhist texts mention Seven Buddhas of Antiquity: Vipassi, who lived 91 *kalpas* ago; Sikhi, who lived 31 *kalpas* ago; Vessabhu, who lived 31 *kalpas* ago; Kakusandha, the first of the Buddhas who lived during the present *kalpa*; Konagamana, the second Buddha of the present *kalpa*; Kassapa, the third Buddha of the present *kalpa*; and Gautama, the fourth Buddha of the present *kalpa*. Maitreya will come in about 160,000 years.

handful of leaves (SN 56, 31). The dharma of the Buddha is both inspired from above and the result of his own realization.

As a result, the world will resist the inevitable devolution of the age of degeneration¹⁴⁶ a little bit longer, for another 2,500 years,¹⁴⁷ before it plunges once again into a new dark age, only to be reignited by the lamp of wisdom some tens of thousands of years hence. Such is the general chronological perspective of the Pali Canon. The Buddha describes how degeneration appears in the world, beginning with feeling, followed by craving, seeking, acquisition, decision-making, lust, attachment, appropriation, avarice, and possessiveness, finally ending in violence, quarrels, disputes, arguments, strife, abuse, lying, and “other evil unskilled states.” Thus, the Buddha says that possessiveness is the essential evil unskilled state, which, if abandoned, all the others will progressively disappear as well, in a causal structure reminiscent of the doctrine of interdependent origination.¹⁴⁸

The cyclical theory that holds that the fourfold process consisting of creation, evolution, devolution, and destruction, followed by a new creation, is fundamental to Indian thinking and is Blavatsky’s basic understanding of the nature of time/process, both macrocosmic and microcosmic. Blavatsky’s thinking, fundamentally Indian, is that everything, including humanity, proceeds from an ultimately rarefied, singular, high energy, high information state, which she calls “Spirit,” and devolves into a crude, variegated, material, low information state, which she calls “Matter,” which we may compare with the scientific notions of negentropy and entropy respectively. According to Buddhism, when a new universe appears, the first human [N.B.]

¹⁴⁶ This is the Buddhist designation for what the Hindus call the Kali Yuga, which began in 3102 BCE.

¹⁴⁷ Or five thousand years commencing from the Parinirvana about 397 BCE. Concerning the Parinirvana, Blavatsky identifies it with Sanskrit *Paranishpanna*, lit. ‘beyond knowledge, completeness, perfection, or happiness.’ Blavatsky says that it is “the summum bonum, the Absolute ... that condition of subjectivity which has no relation to anything but the one absolute truth ... It is that state that leads one to appreciate correctly the full meaning of Non-being, which ... is absolute Being. Sooner or later, all that now seemingly exists, will be relatively and actually in the state of *Paranishpanna*” (SD, I, 42, 53). Blavatsky also refers to this as “the Great Day of Be-With-Us.”

¹⁴⁸ “... the Non-Separateness of all that lives” (SD, I, 68). See also op. cit., 623, 627, 638.

beings to be reborn are highly energetic, bisexual or transsexual, long-lived beings, similar to the luminous bisexual spheres or globes described by Plato: “man evolved primarily as a luminous incorporeal form, over which, like the molten brass round the clay model of the sculptor, the physical frame of his body was built by, through, and from, the lower forms and types of animal terrestrial life” (SD, II, 112). (Modern science tells us that human cells make up only 43% of the body’s cell count [i.e., 15 trillion cells]. This includes bacteria, viruses, fungi, and archaea [formerly classified as bacteria]).¹⁴⁹

Thus, human beings are in their essential nature not primates or even any sort of animal. Similarly, according to the Buddha, the original human beings were devas (lit. ‘shining ones’) of the realm of Streaming Radiance (*abhassara devas*), constituting the 17th plane, counting from the lowest hell world, or the 15th, counting from the highest Sphere of Neither Perception nor Non-perception, there being thirty-one planes or dimensions of worldly (samsaric) existence in all. Each of these planes corresponds to a state of consciousness, and is in fact a function of the consciousnesses that inhabit it, without which it could not exist. Similarly, the Buddha traces the degeneration of society back to an original break with the dharma, thus degenerating through an historical or quasi-historical succession of social stages, including misrule, poverty, theft, capital punishment, murder, violence, incest, greed, and finally general immorality. The original humans were extremely long-lived, but degenerated into modern man due to their increasingly gross fondness for sensual enjoyment.

Longevity decreased, sexual differences appeared, territoriality emerged, and human beings finally lived like animals, culminating in a general destruction. A few, a changed remnant, survived who established a new civilization based on dharma. At least some of these destructions are associated by Blavatsky with reversals of the magnetic pole of the earth, the most recent according to modern science being 780,000 years ago, associated with volcanism, a weakening of the earth’s magnetic field, increased solar radiation, genetic mutations, possible extinctions, and increased exposure to harmful UV light. Once again, Blavatsky was decades ahead of her time.

¹⁴⁹ James Gallagher, “More than Half Your body Is Not Human,” BBC News (April 10, 2018), <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-43674270>. Also see SD, I, 225, 260f.

Interestingly, Theosophy sees the devolution of Spirit into Matter as an opportunity for matter itself, essentially unconscious and devoid of spirituality, to ascend back towards Spirit in a reciprocal movement, thus explaining the coexistence of entropy and negentropy, or evolution and devolution or degeneration (see SD, I, 417). This is the basis of Blavatsky's theory of the Seven Ages of Man (summarized in SD, I, 158 ff.). Blavatsky describes a series of anthropological stages of human physical and spiritual evolution, analogous to but not identical with speciation.

When it comes to understanding Blavatsky's theory of human evolution, however, we come to a serious difficulty in that she correlates these stages with the geological epochs of the earth, following the conventional dating of these epochs according to 19th century science. However, the 19th century chronology of geological epochs is very inaccurate, as it was developed before the advent of radiocarbon dating. Consequently, Blavatsky's chronology is outdated. Another difficulty that presents itself is: Are the Ages derived from the geological epochs, or are the geological epochs merely convenient chronological markers for the progress of the Ages of Man? I have approached this problem by reviewing Blavatsky's descriptions of the Seven Ages of Man in detail, and correlating them with our current understanding of chronology as far as possible.

My tentative evaluation is presented in the table below, but one must really have a deep understanding of the relative chronology of genetic markers in order to truly understand and thus criticize Blavatsky's conclusions thoroughly, and potentially adjust them to current knowledge, including migration patterns, which are much better understood today than in Blavatsky's time, although there clearly are correlations. Thus, what I offer here is merely a tentative first step. Much more needs to be done. In this table of the Seven Ages of Man, I have given the cultural epochs or aeons the names that Blavatsky used, based on the geographic landmarks and geologic markers that she gave, but the chronologies are based on current science.

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The Seven Ages of Man				
Age	Epoch	Geographic Landmarks	Geologic Markers	Currently Accepted Dates
I	Polarian	Arctic	Mt Meru	1.2 bya–65 mya
II	Hyperborean	Arctic Circle	Tropical Arctic	55 mya
III	Lemurian (aka Mu)	Indian Ocean	Easter Island	700,000 ya
IV	“Atlantean”	Ghana	Last Geomagnetic Reversal ^a	780,000 ya ^b
V	“Aryan” (post-Atlantean)	America, Europe, Asia Minor	Green Sahara	11,000-5,000 ya ^c
VI		America		21st cent.
VII		Pacific Ocean	?	?

^aAccording to modern science, there have been 183 geomagnetic reversals in the past 83 million years, producing average intervals or epochs of 453,552 years. We are thus well overdue for the next geomagnetic reversal.

^b Blavatsky identifies the end of the main Fourth Age with a series of earthquakes about 800,000 y.a.

^c Blavatsky identifies 9564 BCE with the disappearance of the last Fourth Age island, and thus the end of the epoch, based on Plato’s *Critias* (433 BCE).

Before we continue, we must clarify and thus destigmatize the now disreputable term “Aryan.” The word is Sanskrit, and is used frequently in the Buddhist scriptures to refer to someone who is noble or civilized, lit. ‘one who strives upward,’ without any negative or pejorative connotation. Blavatsky clearly refers to the Fifth Age of Man as multi-ethnic (SD, II, 444), including dark brown, red, yellow, and white “races,” and that nearly all human beings today are “Aryans,” originating from a single progenitor. This theory is the exact opposite of the National Socialist use of the term “Aryan,” which regards the ethnic melting pot of the United States with contempt. Blavatsky’s “Aryans” include Hindus, Persians, Celts, Teutons, Slavs, and even Semites.

Moreover, she states that the admixture of races in America will result in the appearance of a Sixth Age, beginning with the appearance of the sixth sub-group of the Fifth Age in the early 21st to 22nd century, inaugurating a new “golden age” while the rest of the world

enters a karmic dark age (SD, II, 147n, 444f). It is not hard to see the global dictatorship of a totalitarian cult of capitalist/communist industrialism in the latter, with the inevitability of climate change and imminent worldwide apocalypse,¹⁵⁰ beginning in fact with the Covid-19 pandemic now upon us. The seventh sub-group will begin to emerge in about 25,000 years (SD, II, 445). Thus, while perhaps unfortunate in hindsight, it is not possible to equate Blavatsky's use of the term "Aryan" with its appropriation by the National Socialists, any more than their appropriation of the Swastika by Nazis has any significance for Buddhism or the Cross by the Ku Klux Klan for Christianity.

In fact, Blavatsky explicitly declares, "dividing humanity into superior and inferior races is a fallacy" (SD, II, 425, 429). Far from being a proto-fascist or even a proto-Nazi, Blavatsky repeatedly declares her sympathy for the plight of working people. Thus, we would have to conclude that Blavatsky, like the Buddha and his disciple, Ashoka, was a socialist (see, e.g., SD, I, 563f., 644).

Blavatsky's theory may be compared with what is now known about continental drift. Ten ancient supercontinents are known. The most recent of these, however, is Pangaea, which existed about 175 m.y.a. (and before). However, it was centred on the equator and not the Arctic. Some identify Lemuria (a.k.a. Mu) with Gondwanaland, an ancient supercontinent that existed between 175 or 180 and 550 m.y.a., which is however much more ancient than the date Blavatsky assigns to it.

Blavatsky's basic model of human social and spiritual evolution is divided into seven ages or stages, which emerge out of each other in a progressive process of creation, evolution, devolution, and destruction, each of which is divided into seven sub-groups. The basic structure is thus numerological, divided into 49 (7×7) stages,¹⁵¹ a number that

¹⁵⁰ Swedenborg declared the Apocalypse to have occurred in 1757, the same year in which William Blake was born, and just shy of 1760, the accepted date for the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Cf. Uranus, planet of revolutionary change, discovered in 1781, just two years before the end of the American Revolutionary War, and the year of publication of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.

¹⁵¹ In Blavatsky's metaphysics, the number seven is fractal; thus, phenomena exhibit a series of powers of seven: $7 \times 7 \times 7$, ad infinitum.

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has special significance in Tibetan Buddhism. According to some sources, the Buddha spent forty-nine days in deep meditation after his Enlightenment. This is the number of days that a soul spends in the *bardo* “in between” rebirths. Thus, it corresponds to the number of days after conception that a soul takes up residence in the developing fetus.

Part II

First Age – The Progenitors

The first terrestrial humans were almost unconscious, unintelligent but super-spiritual, inhabitants of the “Imperishable Sacred Land,” which appears to correspond to the Arctic, the North Pole, or the Pole Star. The Progenitors are associated with Mount Meru, described as the first mountain to arise out of the stormy primeval sea. Blavatsky identifies Mount Meru as a mountain north of the Himalayas, in the Far North, or as the North Pole. Perhaps the Arctic Cordillera, which appeared 1.2 billion to 65 million years ago, is intended, but Blavatsky also identifies Mount Meru as Mount Atlas (66 m.y.a.–1.8 m.y.a.) (SD, II, 493), located however in Antarctica (paradoxically, she also says this identification is fatuous). Meru is identified with Mount Kailash, a supremely important trans-Himalayan wisdom centre for Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Bon, as well as the Pamir mountains.

Second Age – The “Boneless” People

Blavatsky identifies the evolution of the various ages with several now unknown continents, based on the theory of continental drift, which did not begin to be accepted till the mid-20th century.¹⁵² Thus, she postulated the ancient existence of a continent that she called Hyperborea, inhabited by a large yellow complexioned people in what is now Northern Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Scandinavia, Northern Asia, and Kamchatka, a peninsula in the Russian Far East. Remarkably, Blavatsky refers to Climate Change and declares that this was a tropical

¹⁵² “It is only in the XXth century that portions, if not the whole, of the present work will be vindicated” (SD, II, 442).

region. We now know that the Arctic region was in fact tropical about 55 million years ago.

Third Age – The Anti-gods (*Asuras*)

Blavatsky identifies the Third Age of Man, which she calls Lemuria, referring to the lemures, the ghosts of the dead, but also larvae, a.k.a. the kingdom of Saturn, with the *asuras*, the higher dimensional beings or devas that were traditionally cast down into the World Ocean as a result of the “war in heaven,” which she equates with the “fallen angels” of Hebraic mythology (SD, II, 268): “In the Indian philosophy, the Suras are among the earliest and the brightest gods, and become Asuras only when dethroned by Brahmanical fancy” (SD, I, 412). English zoologist Philip I. Sclater originally hypothesized in 1864 the existence of an ancient continent or land bridge in the Indian Ocean to explain the geographical distribution of the lemur and other mammals. The idea was rejected by 1880, but the hypothesis seems to have anticipated the identification of Gondwana or Gondwanaland in the continental drift model in 1896, which existed (according to the modern reckoning) from 550 to 180 m.y.a. The continent of Lemuria once existed in the Indian Ocean, including Australia, extending into the South Pacific Ocean. Australia, New Guinea, and Madagascar are its surviving remnants.

According to modern science, the first human-like ancestors (or *manus*) appeared between fifteen and twenty million years ago (Blavatsky says 18,618,727 years [SD, I, 150]). Modern Africans, South Indians, Australians, and East Indians are the Lemurian’s descendants, as well as some of the olive-skinned inhabitants of the Mediterranean. Blavatsky calls the later Lemurians “highly intelligent and intellectual” (SD, II, 263). According to Blavatsky, Lemuria was destroyed by fire.

Fourth Age – The Giants

A portion of the seventh sub-group of the Third Age, inhabiting a part of Africa, now occupied by the Ashanti, in modern Ghana, were the progenitors of the Fourth Age. The original Fourth Age people had Mongolian features and bronze skin, from which Native Americans, Malaysians, and Mongolians are descended, and were tall.

The seven sub-groups of the Fourth Age are the “Rmoahals,” Cro-Magnons? (Tlavati) (210,000 y.a.), American Indians, Turanians, Phoenicians (2500 BCE), Akkadians (2334 BCE), and Mongolians (40,000 y.a.). The Fourth Age people were the first human beings (SD, II, 266), and developed an advanced cosmopolitan civilization, including brown, red, yellow, white, and black people,¹⁵³ but became degenerate through the practice of sorcery and bestiality with the pithecoids, orangutans, gorillas, and chimpanzees (15–20 m.y.a.). Blavatsky says that the Druids (3rd cent. BCE) were descended from the Fourth Age, and that modern European civilization is a renaissance of the Fourth Age. According to Blavatsky, the Fourth Age was destroyed by water.

Blavatsky’s theory of the Fourth Age survives in modern theories of an original human civilization that disappeared about 12,000 years ago, popularized by writers like Graham Hancock, etc.¹⁵⁴

Fifth Age – The “Aryans”

The progenitors of the “Aryan” group migrated out of “Atlantis” and traveled to the area of the Sahara desert, at that time a rich and verdant land, which we now know existed in fact between 11,000 and 5,000 BCE. Others travelled to the Gobi desert, which was a vast inland sea (the geological statement is correct). Similarly, Plato and *Critias* both put the end of Atlantis about nine thousand years before their time, circa 10,000 BCE. Elsewhere Blavatsky identifies the origin of the Aryans with the far North (SD, II, 768). According to Blavatsky, most human beings today belong to the Fifth Age, consisting of five sub-groups: Hindu, Arabian, Persian, Celtic, and Teutonic, the original home of which was in the Jutland peninsula. Today we would call the Fifth Age of Man, the Neolithic.

¹⁵³ Blavatsky predicts the same for modern civilization by the end of the 22nd century.

¹⁵⁴ The Buddha and Laozi refer to this civilization. Since the Indus Valley civilization (3300–1300 BCE) and other monumental artifacts (e.g., Anghor Watt) were only discovered recently (1921–22 and 1840s respectively), the existence of such a “lost civilization” is certainly conceivable, though hotly disputed.

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Some modern historians believe that the Teutones may have descended from the Celts. Modern humans will in turn disappear after millions of years (SD, II, 445). The Sixth Age will evolve in Australia and the western United States, especially California, as well as in Canada and New Zealand, beginning in the early 21st century. These groups will develop psychic powers, associated with the reawakening of the dormant pituitary gland (i.e., the *ajna chakra*, or “third eye”). Although this process is just in its inception, one can already see the signs of the times, especially in California, the natural home of the counterculture.

Sixth Age – Spiritual Man

Blavatsky identifies the Sixth Age with an ascending arc that will quickly transcend the bonds of matter and flesh (SD, II, 446), paralleling inventor and technologist Ray Kurzweil’s declaration that humanity is on the verge of transcending its own biology. The bodies of the future humans will be ethereal and androgynous. Americans and Europeans will become a new people with many new nations, absorbing the Fifth Age people over a period of hundreds of thousands of years (SD, II, 445). They will develop an additional, clairvoyant sense. Esoteric philosophy will be universally accepted (SD, I, 298). Blavatsky says that the Sixth Age will survive for millions of years (SD, I, 384).

Seventh Age – Perfected Man

Concerning the Seventh and final Age, Blavatsky says only that it will be even more ethereal than the sixth and that the great adepts and initiated ascetics will “once more produce mind-made immaculate Sons” (SD, II, 275). It is during the epoch of the Seventh Age that Maitreya, the Fifth or Coming Buddha of Compassion, which Blavatsky identifies with the Tenth (Kalki) Avatar of Hinduism, will appear, thus, after millions of years (see above; also, SD, I, 470).

Blavatsky refers to a racial conflict that will occur at the end of the first 5,000-year cycle of the Kali Yuga, the age of degeneration, beginning in 3102 BCE, presaging the current obsession with “identity

politics.” This is of course 1899.¹⁵⁵ Blavatsky died in 1891. The First World War followed the predicted date by just 15 years, preceded by the First Italo-Ethiopian War (1894–96), the Spanish American War (1898), the Boer War (1898–1901), the Boxer Rebellion (1900), and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905).

Talk IV

Kabala

Traditionally attributed to Abraham, Kabala represents the secret and mystic meaning of the Hebrew Bible, comparable to the Upanishads in relation to the Vedas of Hinduism. However, Blavatsky notes that the Kabala did not originate with the Jews, but was rather adapted by them from Chaldea and Egypt. Blavatsky writes: “Read by the aid of the Kabala one finds a matchless temple of occult truths, a well of deeply concealed beauty hidden under a structure, the visible architecture of which, its apparent symmetry notwithstanding, is unable to stand the criticism of cold reason, or to reveal its age, for it belongs to all the ages” (SD, I, 336).

¹⁵⁵ According to Blavatsky, this prediction is based on an unknown book of prophecies in two volumes, each volume corresponding to a five thousand-year period from the advent of the Kali Yuga in 3102 BCE. The second volume has been in preparation since the time of the Buddha’s “grand successor,” Sankaracharya, referring most probably to Adi Shankara (700–750 CE?), who consolidated the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta and recognized the Buddha as the ninth avatar of Vishnu (this is a clue to the Hindu orientation of Blavatsky’s interpretation of Buddhism). The reference is probably to a prediction attributed to Krishna in the *Brahma Vaivarta Purana* (8–10th cent. CE), “that after five thousand years of Kali Yuga there will be a dawn of a new Golden Age which will last for ten thousand years” (50, 59). Blavatsky predicted the advent of the Age of Aquarius in 1900, based on a start date of 255 BCE and an interval of 2,155 years. In fact, based on these assumptions, the Age of Aquarius began in 1901, allowing for the difference of one (not two) years between 1 BCE and 1 CE, there being no year 0 in the common calendar. The year 255 BCE is based on the work of Gerald Massey, poet, spiritualist, and Egyptologist, who believed that this was the true date of the birth of Christianity, which he identified with the Age of Pisces. Blavatsky refers to Massey frequently. Interestingly, this is when the Hebrew Bible began to be translated into Greek in the Septuagint. (See SD, I, 612, etc.).

In Hebrew the secret God of the Kabalists is called *Ain-Soph*, literally ‘without bounds,’ “the Absolute endless No-thing,” the Nameless deity that is Nothing and Darkness, which Blavatsky equates to *Parabrahmam*, discussed in Talk I. A circle and its diameter represent its first comprehensible manifestation. The circle is represented by nought, the diameter by the line or primal One, the first comprehensible manifestation of the incognizable Primal Cause, whence all other numbers derive, brilliantly anticipating digital physics, in which everything is represented by a binary code of zeroes and ones, like a computer, first proposed by Edwin Janes in 1957. Blavatsky says, “No better definition could thus be given of the natural symbol and the evident nature of Deity, which having its circumference everywhere (the boundless) has, therefore, its central point also everywhere; in other words, is in every point of the Universe” (SD, I, 114).

This development is then represented by the ten (1 0) *Sephiroth* or Emanations (lit. ‘numbers’), which together constitute the Adam Kadmon, the Primordial or Archetypal Man, and constitute the foundation of the Kabala. The ten limbs of the heavenly man, or Microprosopus, are the ten *sephiroth*. Blavatsky relates the 0 to the yoni and the 1 to the lingam, referring to the female and male energies, which together constitute the mystery of creation. Blavatsky seems to be particularly fascinated by this association, and refers to it frequently in *The Secret Doctrine*. In Talk I, I discussed the Kabalistic circle of the Elohim, A L H Y M, which conceals the value of pi, which I won’t repeat in detail here.

The *sephiroth* are said to manifest from the *Ain-Soph*, the Boundless, and are themselves described as Light. The *sephiroth* are divided into three groups or orders, consisting of the divine attributes, the physical or sidereal *sephiroth*, and the metaphysical *sephiroth*, the latter called *kether* (the Crown, the mathematical x, or unknown quantity), *chochmah*, and *binah*. The remaining seven *sephiroth* represent the seven spirits of the Presence and the planets. These metaphysical *sephiroth* are represented in the Sacred Unutterable Name of God, Y H W H, the letters of which correspond to *Kether* (Yod), *Binah* (Heh), *Chochmah* (Waw), and the final Heh, symbolizing life and generation.

The Unity is of course the Monad or One Cause, the simplest Being, which alone is considered substantial and real. The Duad – or Dyad – is the primal Cause, the origin of Evil, Matter, and Illusion.

Thus, all numbers proceed from THAT which was before all numbers. The interaction of the three upper and four lower worlds produces the scintillas – particles, sparks, or traces. The Primal Cause was represented by the triadic *Shaddai*, then the fourfold Tetragrammaton, “one, but of a male-female nature,” expressing the union of the male and the female, *chochmah* and *binah*, symbolized by the *Shekinah*, the synthesis of spirit or grace. The feminine *Shekinah* corresponds to the Christian Holy Spirit, and the Sophia of the Gnostics. Blavatsky further correlates the sexless *Shekinah* with Nirvana – a state, not subject to anything, an absolute Presence – and to the Indian Shakti, the divine Consort (SD, I, 618).

The Tetragrammaton is symbolized by the hexagram, or six pointed star, the symbol of the Logos in its first emanation, corresponding (according to Blavatsky) to Vishnu. The combination of the Hexagram and the Pentagram, the 5 and 6, represents the Great Work (SD, I, 78). The ten numbers or *sephiroth* altogether manifest in space and time in their numerical order, and are referred to as the OTz, or “Tree,” i.e., of Eden, the symbol of the Holy of Holies, which together connote the numbers 7 and 9, yoni and lingam, which are then worked out through the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which are also the numbers, powers, and ultimately the words that constitute the archetypes and prototypes of existence. Similarly, Plato says that God geometrizes in fabricating the universe.

Thus, zero is the *Parabrahm*; 1, the vector, word, or Logos, the creative principle; 2, the accursed binary, the origin of differentiation, contrasts, discord, matter, and the beginning of evil: “that imperfect state into which the first manifested being fell when it got detached from the Monad” (SD, II, 575). 10, represented as a circle with a vertical line or an X, represents “the first Divine Manifestation containing ‘every possible power of exact expression of proportion’” (SD, II, 37), the union of the masculine and feminine principles in the realm of the Four Elements ($10 = 1 + 2 + 3 + 4$), i.e., man. Interestingly, in the Hebrew alphabet, 10 = Yod, is represented by a point, corresponding to the *bindu* or Monad. Altogether, the ten *sephiroth* and the twenty-two letters constitute the “thirty-two paths of wisdom” of the Tree of Life, so-called.

Satan

Perhaps Blavatsky's most daring and provocative speculation is her view of Satan, the Great Dragon of Wisdom. The Bible refers to the "Son of God," the bright star of the early morning, Lucifer, or Venus. He is the *Agathodaemon*, the first created Archangel who sprang from the depths of Chaos, whose name, Lux, the luminous Son of the Morning, or the manvantaric Dawn of the age, means 'light.' According to Blavatsky, he is higher and older than Jehovah, but Lucifer is the bright angel of light, the light and life bringer. Jehovah is Saturn, and Saturn is Satan, SAT being the Sanskrit word for Being, associated with the Tau Cross, to which Satan, as Egyptian Typhon or Set, is chained and bound, like Jesus in his time. This is in fact the central glyph of the Theosophical Society, represented by the letters, TS, the Tree and the Serpent (SD, I, 405). Lucifer is the great magical agent, the Astral Light, the Sidereal Virgin, the *Mysterium Magnum*, Aether, and *Akasa* in different traditions (SD, II, 511).

As the seducing serpent he is Samael, the Angel of Death. Thus, in his highest aspect, Lucifer, the spirit of intellectual enlightenment and freedom of thought, is the Logos or Christ; in his lowest, the adversary. Blavatsky regards the "Fall of the Angels" as an allegory of the alienated soul in which Satan and his host refused to create physical man, thus becoming the direct saviours and creators who made of terrestrial man a divine creature, who possesses within himself the potential to transcend the angels themselves. Thus, Satan affirms his right of independent judgment and will, free agency and responsibility, under Karmic Law.

Spirit became volitional and so fell away from the Divine desire into matter. This is the origin and meaning of the War in Heaven, an archetype found in both Western and Eastern traditions. Satan gave man the law of the Spirit of Life and made him free from the sin of Ignorance and of death. In the Buddhist view, ignorance (*avidya*) is of course the primary "sin." This is the Gnostic view, similar to the Yazidi view of "Iblis."

The True and Perfect Serpent of Eternity and All Knowledge, associated by Jesus with Wisdom, leads the souls of those who trust him out of the metaphorical Egypt of the body, through the Red Sea

of Death into the Land of Promise, saving them on the journey from the serpents of the wilderness, the rulers of the stars (SD, I, 410). This True and Perfect Serpent is the seven-voweled deity, Jehovah (IEHΩΟΥΑ), in the *Pistis Sophia*, one with Christ, who comes out of the east as lightning, as Satan falls from heaven like lightning, to whom the candidate for initiation is sent, referring to the mystery of the Seven Vowels, and their 49 (7×7) Powers. This initiation is that of the *Kriyasakti* (lit. 'act of power'), the power of the holy sages or rishis, described by Blavatsky as "the mysterious power of thought which enables it to produce external, perceptible, phenomenal results by its own inherent energy" (SD, I, 293) and "that mysterious and divine power latent in the will of every man" (SD, II, 173), associated with the procreative energy, Eros, which realization ends in immortality. Similarly, the *kundalini* energy, referred to as the Serpent Power, is a power or Force that moves in a curved or spiral path, the Universal Life Principle of Nature, including attraction and repulsion, by which internal and external relations are continuously adjusted to each other, resulting in the process of rebirth. The Yogi must subjugate this power by means of will-power (*itchasakti*). "Serpent" or "Dragon" were names given to the "Wise Ones," the initiated adepts of antiquity. Similarly, the *nagas* ('serpents') were said to be an order of being that dwelled in water and protected "treasure texts" or esoteric knowledge (SD, I, 404, 408f.).

Blavatsky's conception of Satan is not unlike Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's notion of the Supermental, which fulfills itself in the Sacrifice of the Light in the Act of Incarnation, thereby redeeming Matter. She writes:

Hence arose the necessity of making of the "Dragon of Wisdom," the *Serpent of Genesis*: of the conscious god who needed a body to clothe his too subjective divinity, Satan. But the "innumerable incarnations of Spirit," and "the ceaseless pulse and current of desire" refer, the first one, to our doctrine of Karmic and cyclic rebirths, the second – to EROS, not the later god of material, physiological love, but to the divine desire of the gods, as well as in all nature, to create and give life to Beings. This, the Rays of the one "dark," because invisible and incomprehensible FLAME could achieve only by themselves descending into matter. (SD, II, 234)

Blavatsky's theology represents a Gnostic reversion from Christian/Zoroastrian dualism to an essentially Judaic/Yazidi trans-dual understanding of a unitary God; therefore, Satan is a tool of the divine,

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and ultimately is the Divine (see SD, I, 411 et seq.). She then dissolves the One into the None that is All and the Nothingness that is Full, familiar to us in Indian thinking, both Hindu and Buddhist, as well as in Taoism, thus redeeming ourselves from all gods:

... all their likes in the universal Pantheon of human fancy – vanish and disappear in thin air. And along with these will vanish their shadows, the dark aspects of all those deities. The Ahrimans and Typhons, the Samaels and Satans, must be all dethroned on that day, when every dark evil passion will be subdued. There is one eternal law in nature, one that always tends to adjust contraries and to produce final harmony. It is owing to this law of spiritual development superseding the physical and purely intellectual, that mankind will become freed from its false gods, and find itself finally – SELF-REDEEMED. (SD, II, 420)

“Satan, the Serpent of Genesis, [is] the real creator and benefactor, the Father of Spiritual mankind. For it was he who was the ‘Harbinger of Light,’ bright radiant Lucifer, who opened the eyes of the automaton created by Jehovah” (SD, II, 243). Like Milton, Blavatsky is at her best when describing the enemy of God, and looks forward to an imminent Age of Satan, the prince of anarchy, when all people – not just isolated individuals – will achieve spiritual self-perfection. For in the final analysis Satan is the Beast, and the number of the Beast is the number of Man: “It is only a question of that Power being latent or active in us” (SD, II, 478).

Phallicism

Genesis 1:27 says, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them,” whereupon he enjoined on them the duty of procreation. Thence marriage is a sacrament in the Greek and Roman churches. However, the inference is inescapable that the Divine is androgyne. The words “male and female” refer specifically to the male and female generative energy, centrifugal and centripetal, positive and negative, etc. (SD, I, 282, 604), called *lingam* and *yoni* in the Sanskrit, and yang and yin in the Chinese tradition.

We have already talked about the Tetragrammaton, where the Yod is the *membrum virile* and the He the womb. This is the Kabalistic doctrine of the *Adam Kadmon*, the Primordial or Supreme Man, the

first spiritual world that came into being after the contraction of God's Infinite Light (*Ohr*), pure potential, the collective essence of the soul. Nevertheless, Blavatsky declares phallic worship to be a late stage in the development in the true meaning of the symbols.¹⁵⁶ Thus, gods to whom geese were sacred, like Pan, the god of nature, degenerated into priapic deities.

The abstract and divine power of procreative nature became grossly anthropomorphized. Similarly, with the Egyptian egg standing upright supported by a sacred Tau, or the universal symbol of the Egg and the Serpent. Thus, the phallus (*lingam*) and *yoni* are symbols of cosmic creative energy. One is struck by the frequency of Blavatsky's allusions to phallicism in *The Secret Doctrine*, but her very denials hint at a deeper truth that she was unable or unwilling to address. Sexual yoga is an integral component of Dzogchen (Blavatsky's "*Dzyan*"), and is also present in the Kalachakra, as well as many other spiritual traditions. The Buddha himself was sexually active until just six years before his Enlightenment.

The Third Eye

Generally known as "the Eye of Shiva," the inner spiritual eye of the seer and the faculty that manifests through it is not the power of seeing at a distance, but rather the faculty of spiritual intuition or insight, through which direct and certain knowledge (gnosis) can be obtained. This is a "third eye," located in the centre of the brain, usually identified with the pineal gland. According to the *Book of Dzyan*, this eye has become atrophied in modern man due to our becoming too involved in gross materiality.

The Buddha discusses five eyes: the Physical Eye, Divine Eye, Wisdom Eye, Dharma Eye, and Buddha Eye. The Divine Eye perceives karmic causes and effects; the wisdom eye, the truth of *dharmata*, or Buddhist ontology; the dharma eye, the understanding of the dharma transmission and teachings. The Buddha eye sees the primordial wisdom. The third eye corresponds to the *ajna chakra* in the system of *kundalini* yoga.

¹⁵⁶ Mircea Mircea takes the same view, contra Terence McKenna, of the history of the use of entheogens.

The Kali Yuga

According to Hinduism, the Black Age or Kali Yuga began in 3102 BCE – the year of Krishna’s death.¹⁵⁷ Interestingly, this is close to the beginning of the Mesoamerican Long Count calendar in 3114 BCE, which came to an end in 2012, the so-called “Fourth Sun” – a period therefore of 5,125 years. The Kali Yuga is an age of falsity, wickedness, perversity, misogyny, theft, power mongering, short-livedness, insatiable desire, barbarism, and gross materialism, equivalent to the Buddhist “age of degeneration,” characteristic of Western civilization (SD, I, 377): “Property alone will confer rank; wealth will be the only source of devotion; passion will be the sole bond of union between the sexes; falsehood will be the only means of success in litigation; and women will be objects merely of sensual gratification” (SD, I, 377). According to Blavatsky, based on a passage in the *Puranas*, cited in a previous talk, the Kali Yuga is divided into intervals of five thousand years. This corresponds therefore to 1899, eleven years after the publication of *The Secret Doctrine* and eight years after Blavatsky’s death in 1891.

According to the *Purana*, this will be followed by a golden age of ten thousand years. Nevertheless, Blavatsky also says that the transition will be characterized by racial conflict (SD, I, xliv), and of course there were numerous wars during this time, at the apex of the colonial period, culminating in 1914, when Europeans controlled 84% of the world’s wealth, coincidentally the first year of World War I. There is also a five-thousand year cycle in the early Buddhist scriptures, which will end about 4604 CE, the all-important midpoint of which will occur about 2104 CE.

The Age of Aquarius

Blavatsky implies that the beginning of the Kali Yuga in 3102 BCE corresponds to the perfect alignment of the planets, which she appears to confuse with the alignment of the tropical and sidereal zodiacs, because Blavatsky bases her view of the latter on Gerald Massey, who definitely puts the beginning of the age of Aries in 2410 BCE,

¹⁵⁷ Similarly, history is said to have begun five thousand years ago (Wikipedia).

apparently following the astronomer Cassini and others, with a precessional rate of 2,155 years per sign.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, Blavatsky accepts Gerald Massey's date of 255 BCE for the beginning of the Christian/Piscean epoch, which is when the Hebrew Bible began to be translated into Greek, interestingly. This would make the advent of the Kali Yuga correspond to the tenth degree of Taurus, and would put the Age of Aquarius at 1906 CE using an average precession of 72 years per degree (2,160 years per sign). However, Massey/Blavatsky's rate of precession would put the Age of Aquarius at 1901 CE. Interestingly, Massey also predicted the imminent advent of a New Messiah or Avatar, who will be symbolized as a water bearer or carrier,¹⁵⁹ as Pisces was symbolized as a fish, Aries as a ram (e.g., ancient Egyptian religion, c 1069–664 BCE), and Taurus as a bull (e.g., Sumerian religion, c 4100–1750 BCE).

According to Blavatsky, this time corresponds to the midpoint of both the Fifth Age of Man and the Fourth Round, the point of perfect equilibrium between Spirit and Matter, reason and intuition, after which spirit and intuition will progressively dominate matter and reason (SD, I, xliii, 537, 610). Blavatsky predicted that the benefits of this increasing spirituality will be seen in the 20th century and after, which we of course see not only in the extraordinary proliferation of science and technology, but in the qualitative transformation of science itself as it transcends materialism, and increasingly resembles spirituality, which Blavatsky presciently believed would characterize 20th century science, beginning with the discovery of the electron in 1897, six years after her death. "To admit the divisibility of the atom," Blavatsky says, "amounts to an admission of an infinite divisibility of substance, which is equivalent to reducing substance to nihil, a nothingness. ... real science is not materialistic" (SD, I, 518f.).

¹⁵⁸ Or one degree of precession every 71.83 years. The actual value for antiquity was 72.46 years (Wikipedia). The currently accepted value is 71.61 years, and is slowly increasing.

¹⁵⁹ Along with Gemini and Virgo, Aquarius is represented by a human being, modelled on Ganymede, beloved of Zeus, celebrated as the most beautiful of mortals, and the model for the Greek custom of pederasty. Aleister Crowley predicted that homosexuality would become the norm during the Age of Aquarius, the 11th sign, ruled by Saturn-Uranus. "Uranian" is an historical term for a homosexual man.

A New Messiah?

Blavatsky predicts that Maitreya, the Fifth or Coming Buddha, the Kalki Avatar of Hinduism, will appear in the Seventh Age of perfected humanity, some millions of years hence, and specifically notes that no saviour of humanity can appear during the Kali Yuga (SD, I, 470), which is a strange thing to say, considering that the Buddha and Jesus Christ, amongst others, appeared during this time. It appears therefore that she identifies the Seventh Age of humanity with the advent of the Satya Yuga, which will begin after 432,000 years and last for 1.728 million years, according to the traditional Hindu reckoning. Nevertheless, it is true that whereas the Buddha of our historical epoch, Siddhartha Gautama, appeared near the nadir of human civilization, when the human lifespan was only about a hundred years, Maitreya will appear near its zenith, in about 160,000 years according to the earliest Pali chronology.

Interestingly, Blavatsky predicts the imminent advent of an Antichrist, who will be Satan incarnate, a coming Apollyon,¹⁶⁰ with Blavatsky herself, the Theosophists, occultists, mystics, and even Buddhists, etc. as His precursors. Similarly, Saturn, Satan, Shaitan, Set, associated with death and destruction, is the ruler of Aquarius and Capricorn, the only planet to govern two astrological signs and therefore two astrological ages in succession – a period of 4,320 years (cf. the duration of the Kali Yuga of 432,000 years).¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Gk. ‘Destroyer,’ conventionally identified with the Antichrist. Given Blavatsky’s rather developed Gnostic view of Satan, I suspect that her prediction of an imminent Apollyon is more along the lines of the Hindu doctrine of Kalki, the tenth avatar of the Kali Yuga who rejuvenates existence, although the latter will not appear until the end of the *yuga*, so this Apollyon is not that. Blavatsky was apparently fascinated by the *Book of Revelation*, as was Aleister Crowley.

¹⁶¹ However, we know from Henrik Kern that the ciphers can be ignored (trans., *Suddharma-Pundarika* [1884; rpt. New York: Dover, 1963], p. 149, n. 3; etc.), but the underlying numerological symbolism is the same, in this case, $432 = 2^4 \times 3^3 = 4^2 \times 3^3$, representing the material synthesis or matrix. 432 Hz is Baroque tuning, and has been proposed as the “natural” or “universal” pitch standard. Cf. 84, which one finds expressed in Buddhism as 840; 8,400; 84,000; 840,000, 8.4 million, etc., signifying infinite extension and cyclicity.

She also predicts that the Masters may send a “disciple more informed and far better fitted” than Blavatsky herself “to give final and irrefutable proofs that there exists a Science called Gupta-Vidya” (lit. ‘secret wisdom’) (SD, I, xxxviii).¹⁶²

¹⁶² Various claims have been made by or on behalf of various people, notably Krishnamurti (d. 1986), who renounced the role in 1929, at the age of 34; Aleister Crowley (d. 1947), who self-identified as the Antichrist from the age of 11 (José Luis de Jesús Miranda [d. 2013] also claimed to be the Antichrist); Sri Aurobindo (d. 1950); Meher Baba (d. 1969); Osho (d. 1990); and Adi Da (d. 2008).

Appendix II

Basic Practices

External Practices

Course I: Preliminary. The Magical Record. Practice of Morality. Construction of the Magical Temple.

Course II: Ritual. Adorations of the Sun. Mass of the Phoenix.

Internal Practices

Course III: Intellectual. Courses of Reading. Tables of Correspondences. Qabalah.

Course IV: Physical. *Asana*. Control of Action.

Course V: Breathwork. Awareness of the Breath. Control of Speech. *Pranayama*. Vibration of Divine Names (Mantra Yoga).

Course VI: Intuition. Divination (Astrology, Tarot, I Ching). Physical Clairvoyance. Active imagination. Lucid dreaming. Meditation ('fixation,' *dharana*). Control of Thought.

Selected Works of Aleister Crowley

*Aleister Crowley and The International.
Ambergis.
Atlantis: The Lost Continent.
The Blue Equinox.
Book Four.
The Book of Lies.
The Book of Thoth.
The Book of Wisdom or Folly.
Commentaries on the Holy Books.
Complete Astrological Writings.
The Confessions of Aleister Crowley.
Crowley on Christ.
De Arte Magica.
The Diary of a Drug Fiend.
The Drug and Other Stories.
Eight Lectures on Yoga.
The Equinox.
The Equinox of the Gods.
The Heart of the Master.
The Holy Books of Thelema.
Konx Om Pax.
Liber OZ.
Little Essays Toward Truth.
The Magical Diaries of Aleister Crowley, 1923.
The Magical Record of the Beast 666.
Magick in Theory and Practice.
Magick Without Tears.
Moonchild.
The Revival of Magick.
The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz.
The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.
777 and Other Qabalistic Writings of Aleister Crowley.
The Tao Te Ching.
Thoth Tarot.
The Vision and the Voice.*

The Winged Beetle.
The Works of Aleister Crowley.

Four Poems

A KA DUA

O mighty all-souled one
Among the beings below:
But lo!
An evil will strive.
Greetings our God of Might
Towering over Earth,
King of all his foes;
Lighten to us your presence
Until we are at rest:
Reveal thyself before we toil.
Dost you rule still, lord?
So arise, honorable serpent,
Free the lusty birds from thy web.
O glorious all-souled one,
Darker than all at large:
Do what thou wilt; all thy half-evil brethren
No rebellion find, for you stand above!
Yet pity them I here pray,
Suffer them the same while I still speak.

WEDDING SONG

*"The irrevocable annihilation of christian civilization is taking shape with
carnivorous flowers of volcanic thought"* Philip Lamantia

O Pan! I am a man!
Freedom or sharp torture
Over the volcano-dark sea
From the skin-bare toilsome countryside,
From the road of bells and gongs,
Over the bliss and languid color
Of golden Tara, freedom or sharp torture —
Birth or death or warmth and dark
Impaled in eternity. O Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan Pan!
I am Father, I am Mother:
Mother, for thy labors
While another begat
Lilith! Immaculate, radiant goddess,
Dew of alabaster! Set
The august patterns of space,
Of hours, days and years,
That glowing carpentry
In numbers ripest never in duration!
Save thy most great height,
Listen, hear thy cleft jaws!
Dew on hard stone heard
Mill-like through ages,
Through whom mountains shape,
Mineral sands smooth,
Calve fires gleaming,
The rings of men ring!
O Pan! Io Pan!
Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! I am
And not another! O Pan! Io Pan Pan!
Io Pan! O Pan! Io Pan Pan Pan Pan Pan Pan Pan,
Ever chaste, neither here nor there,
Tending the buds on immortal trees!
O Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan Pan Pan Pan Pan, Pan,
Son of Péhusōn, son of Tharot,
I knew thee thirty-three years —

Fire in the Mountain

Now I will say bye to you.
You know me.

LAM

The climax and apex
Of wisdom is identifying oneself
Both in thought and appearance
As equal and equally manifested,
The Buddha-nature as nature,
Dealing purely with what is,
Emptiness as substance.
Being only in non-existing awareness,
Everyone who identifies with self
As essence
Is seeking more of it.
Passionately seeking more,
Everyone who identifies with self
Is abandoning everything.
The mistake here is asking
To express oneself,
Experienced only in thought
Firmly planted within non-discussion.
Dwelling solely in abiding nature,
Will possesses no belief
Differing from others,
But even if pure perception to something perceived
Is held ungrudgingly,
Firmly-rooted, defiles.
Chasing form from form to follow sensation
Describes desire.
Whatever reasons are acknowledged,
However radically different
Between terms or identities,
Endless commonality is the same,
In coming back,
Emptiness attached.
The goal is the way
Is the highest path.
Is the path not?
Once there is detachment,
Everyone will think differently,
Though reaching the same awareness

Fire in the Mountain

Undoubtedly ends suffering.
The way
Is to realize all beings
As themselves,
As ultimately empty.

LA GAUCHE (THE LEFT EYE OF AIWAZ)

groundward rockbound
the water's downrush
breaks
rainbowlike
into the witch's hole
winds circlewise
gyral torrential biting
sweeps away
the gate
the spate
that separates
nothing remains
all things bring discs of rings
blue, dazzling eyes
where
sing flowers of radiant eternity
in infinite skies
above the solar wheel shines